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ABSTRACT

This proceedings document provides the texts of 13 presentations given at a 2-day conference in 1991 which focused on policies, materials, programs, and activities being implemented in Alabama to foster the successful transition of youth with disabilities to adult life. Two papers address the national scene: "Transition: Old Wine in New Bottles" (Andrew S. Halpern) and "Transition: Here We Go Again" (Donn Brolin). Programs in Alabama are discussed in the remaining 11 papers: (1) "An Overview of Alabama's Response to the Transition Problem" (Philip Browning et al.); (2) "Transition in Alabama: A Plan for Further Action!" (Philip Browning et al.); (3) "Alabama's Movement toward a Functional Curriculum" (Mabrey Whetstone); (4) "A Work Instruction/Work Experience Program in Dothan" (David Sprayberry et al.); (5) "A Supported Vocational Training Program in Birmingham" (Pamella Hicks Parker); (6) "A Vocational Education Program in Jefferson County" (Beverly Lavender); (7) "State, Local, and Individual Planning for Programs and Services" (Nancy Elliott and Elizabeth Houser); (8) "Self-Directed Abilities and Opportunities for Students in Transition" (Philip Browning); (9) "Resources in Alabama for Job Placement" (Connie Brechin); (10) "Serving Needs and Involving Families in Transition" (William English and Stephen Dunaway); and (11) "Family Perceptions of Transition" (William English). An annotated bibliography contains over 60 transition-related resources. A list of conference participants completes the proceedings. (DB)

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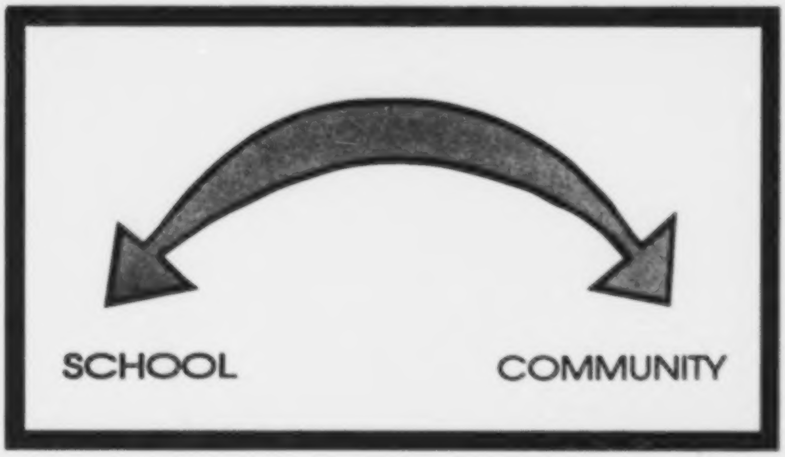
Transition in Alabama:
A Profile of Commitment



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Philip Browning
Editor

State Conference Proceedings
January 1992

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Transition in Alabama

A Profile of Commitment

Edited by

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January 1992

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The joint funding for this state-wide conference was made available through Auburn University's Office of Extension and the College of Education. The Alabama Divisions of Special Education Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education Services, and all conference participants extend their appreciation for helping to make this event possible.

Auburn University is an equal opportunity
educational institution and employer

Mark McClellan, a consumer advocate, keynote speaker,
and
conference favorite!

explaining "People First" to Phil

tell me more about it

PREFACE

A major problem confronting this state and nation pertains to the transition from school-to-work and community of its youth with handicaps. In Alabama alone, for example, 41% of these youngsters, or no less than 2,000 such students per year, have an exiting record of either "drop-outs" or "status unknown". As is evidenced throughout this document, Alabama has taken many significant steps over the past ten years in addressing this problem. One of its more recent efforts was through a state-wide conference held in April, 1991. This event was co-sponsored by Auburn University's Department of Rehabilitation and Special Education and the State's Divisions of Special Education Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Vocational Education, Department of Education.

The general purpose of this conference was to increase transition-related activities at the state and local level in terms of generating new, and improving the quality of existing programs, strategies, policies and techniques designed to improve the lives of its youth with handicaps. More specifically, three of the conference objectives were:

1. to increase the participant's knowledge of transition issues, problems, resources, and programs, especially as they pertain to Alabama;
2. to expand and strengthen the network for all persons interested in Alabama's youth with handicapping conditions; and
3. to publish and distribute to conference participants, and other interested persons, the conference proceedings.

The primary content of this two day program focused on transition policies, materials, programs, and activities currently being implemented in the State of Alabama. As such, the majority of invited presenters were field-based practitioners, as well as local, regional, and state-level coordinators of their respective educational and service delivery programs. In this sense, much of the program "belonged" to those most directly responsible for providing transition services for Alabama's exceptional youth. Clearly, these providers brought with them a wealth of experience and highly useful information to exchange with one another, including exemplary programs, demonstrated transition models, curriculum materials, and the like.

In addition to the program's 15 concurrent sessions, 10 of which are included in these proceedings, two nationally known leaders in the field were invited to serve as keynote speakers. Dr. Andrew Halpern, author of the enclosed paper **Transition: Old Wine in New Bottles**, authored the oft quoted 1985 article entitled "Transitions: A Look at the Foundations." Also, in addition to publishing extensively in the area since that time, he has directed three nationally funded transition projects for (a) a university-based secondary teacher preparation program for exceptional students, (b) a state-wide system for building local transition teams, and (c) a major follow-along study on youth with disabilities in transition.

Dr. Donn Brolin, the second keynote speaker, and author of the conference paper entitled **Transition: Here We Go Again**, is also nationally known, especially in the area of career development of youth with handicaps. He is the past president of The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Division on Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, author of the functional curricula Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach, author and co-author of several books in the area.

Last but not least was a third keynote speaker, Mr. Mark McCellan, a consumer advocate from Birmingham and leader in Alabama's People First movement. Clearly, Mark, who spoke to over 200 conference participants at the banquet, was everyone's favorite. He received a spontaneous standing ovation upon completion of his presentation, which focused on the need to recognize youth with handicaps first and foremost as "People First", as well as the need to recognize their right to decision-making, problem-solving and self-determination. In essence, his message about empowering youth in transition was powerful!

Teachers, service providers, parents, consumers, and employers must attain a high degree of awareness regarding the transition process and current transition efforts. In this sense, one can conclude that the conference was successful, given that the following sample of verbatim statements generally depict the attitude of the participants: "Information provided was excellent. . .", "Very informative and helpful", "This workshop or conference was very informative.", "Very good opportunity--need more of these.", "Thanks to all of you for the opportunity!", and "This was a most informative workshop that presented well informed trainers". My favorite of such comments was offered by a parent in attendance, who wrote:

> **"I am only a parent new to all of the things I saw and learned from this conference. . .The conference from my point of view has been wonderful. I have had a new world open to me on realizing what is available for people. Keep up the good work. Parents need all the help we can get. Thank you!"**

It is largely for reasons such as this that a second state-wide conference on transitions was planned to be held in the Spring of 1992.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to extend a "thank you" to all of those who helped to make this conference possible. First, I wish to acknowledge the other members of the Conference Planning Committee, Dr. Cary Boswell, Mr. Mabrey Whetstone, and Mr. Tom Pierce, who represent the Alabama's Special Education, Rehabilitation and Vocational Education Divisions, respectively. Second, the conference would not have been possible if it had not been for the joint funding that was made available through Auburn University's Extension Division and the College of Education. This support came from Dr. William Sauser, Associate Vice President for Extension, Dr. Robert Rowsey, Assistant Dean for Extension and Development, and Dr. Richard C. Kunkel, Dean, College of Education. Third, it was clear that all of the presenters were well prepared and highly informed about their topics, and excellent in their delivery. Congratulations to all of you on a job well done! Fourth, appreciation is extended to the agency administrators who not only endorsed this event but allowed their employees release time to attend. These leaders include Mrs. Lamona Lucas, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Dr. Kenneth Wilson, Director of Special Education Services, Dr. Stephen Franks, Director of Vocational Education, and Dr. Wayne Teague, Superintendent of the Alabama Department of Education.

And finally, I would like say thanks to the more than 200 conference participants for their enthusiasm and interest in the program. Clearly, your active involvement helped to make this a fun and exciting educational happening. I very much look forward to all of us (and more) congregating again at the next state-wide transition conference in the Spring of '92. See you then!

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Dean Kunkel, College of Education

hosting Andy and Donn

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Dr. Wayne Teague
State Superintendent of Education

Dr. Halpern's
keynote address

"Old Wine in New Bottles"

Dr. Brolin's
keynote address

"Transition: Here We Go Again"

Transition: Old Wine in New Bottles

Andrew S. Halpern [1]

One of my favorite books within our professional literature was written several years ago by Sandra Kaufman. Sandra is the mother of three children, one of whom is a daughter with mental retardation named Nicole. During Nicole's childhood, Sandra and her husband Matt struggled, often unsuccessfully, to find ways of dealing with Nicole's problems. When Nicole was in her early twenties, however, and living in her own apartment, Sandra went back to school and became associated with the anthropological studies of mental retardation being conducted by Robert Edgerton. As part of her work in this area, Sandra decided that she would conduct a "field study" of her own daughter. A book eventually emerged out of this effort which Sandra entitled, Retarded isn't Stupid, Mom!"

Although Nicole's story covers the full span of her life, the essence of Kaufman's book deals with Nicole's transition from adolescence into adulthood. This transition, as you might expect, was a struggle, not only for Nicole but for her parents and siblings as well. Although the hopes and aspirations of all concerned often remained high, there were times when the pathway seemed fraught with so many obstacles that the temptation to give up became almost insurmountable. One particularly poignant example of despair is reported when Nicole burst into tears after attempting to buy a card for a friend's wedding shower. After purchasing the card, she later discovered that it was worded in such a way for a man to give to a woman. Nicole's despair was apparently very great, as she contemplated one more piece of evidence of her self-perceived incompetence which caused her to question her value as a human being.

Sandra recounted her own reaction to this incident through a conversation with her husband, Matt, which occurred shortly after she attempted to console Nicole.

> **"How does she take it?",** I cried. **"Everywhere she turns, the world screams at her that she's inadequate. She's barred from all the fun that [her brother and sister] enjoy. She's denied privileges they are given as a matter of course. She's excluded from the better paying, more interesting jobs. She's told she's too incompetent to have a baby.... She can't even buy a card in a store without being mortified. No wonder she's despondent."**

---

[1] A version of this speech has been published in the 1991 journal of Exceptional Children, 58(3), 202-211.

Matt stared out the front window.

> **"And then,"** I continued, **"we add to her problems. 'Go to work every day. Plan your time carefully. Eat right. Go to bed early. Clean your apartment. Budget your money. Use birth control.' That's what she hears from dawn to dusk. It's all so. . . rational, so middle class. Why does she have to live this way? Where is it written? Good God. She climbs mountains each day just to survive."**
>
> Matt looked at me. **"So what are you saying?"**
>
> I shivered. **"I guess I'm no longer sure I know what's best for her. There are many kinds of success. Maybe the best thing for her would be all-night sessions with friends, a baby or two, SSI for income.". . .**
>
> He was incredulous. **"Could you really accept that? An aimless life in which each day is lived for itself?"** (Kaufman, 1988, pp 132-133)

Sandra Kaufman's anguished question about what's best for Nicole cuts to the heart of the transition movement for people with disabilities. Six years ago, Madeleine Will (1984a) defined a "new" Federal initiative called "transition" with the following words: "The transition from school to working life is an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment." A year later, I argued (Halpern, 1985) that the goals of transition should never be confined to employment only, but should encompass all appropriate dimensions of adult adjustment and involvement in the community. Now, in the 1990's, we no longer debate the appropriateness of a broader set of goals for transition. Instead, we have more appropriately turned our attention to the question of how to make transition work in our local communities. We have acknowledged that transition, from the perspective of families, is not only about services and social goals. From a personal point of view, transition is better defined as "a period of floundering that occurs for at least the first several years after adolescents leave school and attempt to assume a variety of adult roles in their communities."

A Review of Historical Movements

The question of how to make transition work is obviously very complex, and must be addressed at several levels, including policy development, program capacity development, and program implementation in local communities. The issues being addressed were obviously not invented in 1984. In fact, we have experienced several broad social movements during the past three decades which have attempted to deal with these issues. In order to provide us with a perspective for addressing the persistent issues, I will first summarize some highlights of major social movements that have come and gone since the early 1960's in attempts to deal with these issues. Like old wine in new bottles, these issues have been addressed with varying levels of success by each new approach that has emerged to attack the old issues.

Cooperative work/study programs. During the 1960's, a very popular approach that emerged to address these issues was the so-called work/study program, conducted cooperatively between the public schools and local offices of state rehabilitation agencies (Halpern, 1973; 1974; Kolstoe & Frey, 1965). The general goal of these programs was to create an integrated academic, social and vocational curriculum, accompanied by appropriate work experience, that was designed to prepare students with mild disabilities for eventual community adjustment. Typically, these work experiences were unpaid, and the students who participated in the program received school credit, but no money. The administration of these programs was generally structured by formal cooperative agreements between the schools and the rehabilitation agency.

The centerpiece of each cooperative agreement involved the assignment of a portion of each teacher's day (usually one half) to the role and duties of a work coordinator. This, in turn, led to a significant increase in the number of students who participated in work placements as part of their high school program. The formal relationship between a local school and the vocational rehabilitation agency also facilitated the efficient referral of students to become clients of the rehabilitation agency, which in turn eased the transition of students from school to the adult community.

In spite of the tremendous growth and prosperity of this program during the 1960s, it basically died during the 1970's, primarily as a consequence of two intrinsic flaws. The first of these flaws derived from the funding mechanism that was generally used to support the program. This funding mechanism involved documenting the teacher's time spent being a work coordinator, and then certifying the salary attached to this time as "in kind" state contribution of dollars to the rehabilitation agency's budget. Since the majority of the rehabilitation agency's budget comes from federal allocations, at a ratio of several federal dollars for each matching state dollar, this certification of an already existing expenditure (the teacher's salary) as "in kind" matching dollars became a clever way of generating additional Federal rehabilitation dollars at no real additional expense to either the state or the participating schools.

There was a hitch to this neat deal, however, that came from the federal regulations governing the certification of in-kind dollars for matching purposes in the rehabilitation program. According to these regulations, if a person's salary from another agency was certified as rehabilitation matching money, then the proportion of that person's time represented by the "certified" salary had to be supervised by a representative of the rehabilitation agency. As you can imagine, school principals were not thrilled by the prospect of somebody other than themselves supervising their teachers! Although "creative" ways were often improvised for fulfilling this supervision requirement, it frequently emerged as a point of contention in the day-to-day implementation of the work/study agreement.

A second problem emerged from the "similar benefits" requirement of the 1973 amendments to the Vocational Rehabilitation Act. This requirement, in a nutshell, stipulates that the rehabilitation agency cannot pay for services that are the legitimate responsibility of some other agency. Since the schools were not required to provide work experiences to their special education students during the 1960's, the provision of this service could be construed as a rehabilitation service under the terms of the cooperative agreement, thereby providing a justification for the generation of federal matching rehabilitation dollars. A dramatic change occurred, however, with the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 which required that every child with a disability is entitled to " a free and appropriate public education." Interpreters of this new law determined that "work experience" could be construed as a component of an "appropriate" education during high school for many students with disabilities. Such an interpretation made it risky for the rehabilitation agency to purchase this service, since it might be regarded as the responsibility of the schools and would then be governed by the rules concerning similar benefits.

In combination with several other constraints, the supervision and similar benefits requirements of the rehabilitation legislation led to the near demise of the cooperative work/study program during the 1970's. The needs being addressed through the program, however, were still very much alive. A new movement came into being during this period of time called "career education," which held some promise for addressing the persistent needs. The old wine was about to receive a new bottle.

Career education. Unlike the work/study movement which focused on the delivery of services to people with disabilities through a specific type of inter-agency agreement, the career education movement was much more general in its articulation and diffuse in its implementation. In fact, the initial impetus for career education did not even mention the needs of people with disabilities.

The beginning of the career education movement is often identified as occurring in 1970, when Sidney Marland, then the Commissioner of Education, declared career education to be the top priority of the United States Office of Education. Almost immediately following this pronouncement, a federal initiative began to emerge which included the awarding of approximately 90 million dollars in demonstration grants through funding structures that were already available under Parts C and D of the 1968 Vocational Education Act (Hoyt, 1982). Most of these grants were concerned with career education for the general population of students.

During the decade of the 1970's, the movement progressed in several directions including increased federal visibility, extension of the concept to include a clear focus on the needs of people with disabilities, and formal endorsement of the concept by the Council for Exceptional Children. (Brolin, 1983; Cegelka, 1979; Hoyt, 1982). Each of these developmental trends is worthy of brief additional comment.

Federal visibility for the career education movement was clearly enhanced in 1974 when the Office of Career Education was established within the United States Office of Education. The legislative mandate for the movement was crystallized in 1977 with passage of Public Law 95-207, the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act. In addition to providing a general impetus to career education, this act also specifically mentioned people with disabilities as an appropriate target population for services that would be facilitated through the act.

In 1976, the Division of Career Development was approved as a twelfth division of the Council for Exceptional Children. In 1978, CEC formally endorsed the concept of career education through the publication of a position paper on the topic. The significant involvement of this organization in the career education movement laid the foundation for preserving the movement in special education irrespective of Federal involvement. Such a foundation was indeed needed in 1982, when Public Law 95-207 was repealed by Congress, representing a preplanned Federal intent to use this legislation only as a source of "seed money" to nourish the development of the movement (Hoyt, 1982).

When one reflects upon the accomplishments of the career education movement, and these accomplishments were many, it is interesting to observe that a commonly accepted definition of "career education" never did emerge. Definitions from the field ranged from a narrow focusing of goals on the preparation of students for paid employment to a much broader concern with all aspects of adult life. Attempting, perhaps, to mediate between these two positions, the policy adopted by CEC contains elements of both extremes:

> **Career education is the totality of experiences through which one learns to live a meaningful, satisfying work life. Within the career education framework, work is conceptualized as conscious effort aimed at producing benefits for oneself and for others. Career education provides the opportunity for children to learn, in the least restrictive environment possible, the academic, daily living, personal-social and occupational knowledge and specific vocational work skills necessary for attaining their highest levels of economic, personal and social fulfillment. The individual can obtain this fulfillment through work (both paid and unpaid) and in a variety of other societal roles and personal life styles including his/her pursuits as a student, citizen, volunteer, family member, and participant in meaningful leisure time activities.** (Position Paper, 1978)

In many ways, the career education movement can be viewed as an expansion of the work/study movement that preceded it. The work/study movement was fairly narrow in its goals, generally restricted to secondary education, largely focused on serving students with mild mental retardation, typically implemented in programs reserved for students with disabilities, and formally structured as an interagency collaboration. The career education movement was very diffuse in its goals, oriented to both elementary and secondary education, available to students with and without disabilities, implemented in both regular and special education environments, and broadly structured as a general education movement. Both movements were spawned through opportunities presented by federal legislation, and were nurtured largely through federal financial participation. The work/study movement died as an inadvertent consequence of federal legislation and regulation, and the career education movement was intentionally disowned as a federal initiative. Both predecessors left a legacy for the emergence of the transition movement in the 1980's.

Transition. Only two years after the repeal of the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act in 1982, a new federal transition initiative emerged on the scene (Will, 1984a) in the form of a "position paper" from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The essence of this paper involved the articulation of a "transition model", which has come to be known as a "bridges" model. This well-known model describes three types of services (bridges) that are needed to facilitate the transition from school to work.

The first bridge, labeled "transition without special services", refers to the use of *generic* services available to anyone in the community, even if special accommodations are necessary within these services for people with disabilities. Post-secondary education, such as that provided in a community college, is mentioned as a prime example of a generic service.

The second bridge, "transition with time-limited services", refers to *specialized*, short-term services where the presence of a disability is usually *required* in order to *qualify* a person for access to the service. Vocational rehabilitation is offered here as an example.

The third bridge has been labeled "transition with ongoing services." As the model developers point out, this bridge did *not*, in 1984, represent a widely existing service delivery system. Exemplified by "supported employment," this type of service was relatively new (Will, 1984a, 1984b) and had made its presence known primarily in demonstration projects that were themselves supported by federal grants and contracts. The rehabilitation amendments of 1986, however, identified supported employment as a *regular* program, paving the way for an increased funding level over time.

The target of the OSERS transition model, as I mentioned before, was originally restricted to "employment". Perhaps anticipating some concern about the narrowness of this goal, the choice of employment is justified in words such as the following (Will, 1984a):

> **This concern with employment does not indicate a lack of interest in other aspects of adult living. Success in social, personal, leisure, and other adult roles enhances opportunities both to obtain employment and enjoy its benefits . . . The focus on employment as a central outcome of effective transition provides an objective measure of transition success.** (pp. 1-2)

What the author of this policy seemed to be suggesting was that the nonvocational dimensions of adult adjustment are significant and important only in so far as they contribute to the ultimate goal of employment.

Whether or not one agreed with the restricting of transition goals to employment, the impact of this policy was swift and deep. Almost immediately following publication of the OSERS policy on transition (Will, 1984a), requests for "transition" proposals began to appear in a wide array of federal programs dealing with disability. This trend was enhanced through the introduction of transition and supported employment components into new legislation that pertained to people with special disabilities. The newest 1990 amendments to PL 94-142, now called the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (PL 101-476), contain several important new initiatives in the area of transition including the requirement that all Individualized Educational Program's (IEP's) address transition goals no later than the student's 16th birthday.

Comparison of the three movements. Since the transition movement is still in full force today, it is impossible to evaluate the impact of the movement from an historical perspective. Certain comparisons with the work/study and career education movements are possible, however, which allow us to examine the transition movement within the broader context of its forerunners.

As is obvious from the discussion presented above, the transition movement's early focus on employment was narrower than the stipulated goals of either the work/study or career education movements. All three movements were aware that the dimensions of adult adjustment extend beyond employment, but only the early phases of the transition movement adopted a clearly restrictive position on this issue. The reason for this restrictive position was not a lack of appreciation for the complexity of adult adjustment. Rather, it was the sense of the policy makers that a more limited objective would be more feasible, fundable, and easier to evaluate than a program with multiple objectives.

In a similar "restrictive" vein, both the transition and work/study movements focused their efforts on the limited time span of high school years through early adulthood, whereas the career education movement covered a much broader span of human development. On the other hand, the transition movement provides the broadest focus on the types of adult service agencies that need to be directly involved in the partnerships with the public schools in order to facilitate the movement from school to work.

Current Needs and Concerns

Where, then, do we stand after some 30 years of programs that have been designed to prepare young people with disabilities for adult roles in their communities? A candid answer to this question must proclaim that we still have a long way to go. In the area of curriculum and instruction, we are still frequently deficient in what we teach, how we teach and where we teach. Curriculum content still tends to focus too much on remedial academics and not enough on functional skills. Instructional design often ignores the issues of maintenance and generalization, without which we have no reason to believe that the skills being taught in the classroom will be used in the community settings where they are relevant. The location of instruction is frequently in the school-based classroom, even though a community-based setting would often be more appropriate.

Other concerns, in addition to curriculum and instruction, leave us less than satisfied with the current state of affairs. Integration of high school students with disabilities into the mainstream remains a cloudy issue, both with respect to its desirability and its implementation. Too many students drop out, and those who remain often receive a meaningless certificate of attendance rather than some form of a useful and appropriate diploma. Transition planning is often ineffective, or even nonexistent. The array of adult services is insufficient to meet the needs of those who leave school, and parents or other relatives must often assume the life-long role of case manager for their child or children with disabilities.

These unresolved issues and concerns can be addressed in several ways. First, new policies can be developed to structure the ways that we think about needs and priorities. Second, the capacity to address unresolved issues and concerns can be enhanced through legislation, resource allocation, and careful planning for the development of new programs and services. Third, new programs and services can be implemented, evaluated and refined in local communities, drawing upon the policy development and capacity building efforts that provide a foundation for local activities. All three levels of effort -- policy development, capacity building, and the effective implementation of new programs -- can be enhanced through the collection and dissemination of appropriate follow-along information that documents the experiences of students while in school, and the outcomes that they achieve after leaving school. All of these efforts to address the unresolved problems of transition must work together in tandem if widespread impact is eventually to occur.

Looking Toward the Future

Each of these approaches to facilitating change is worthy of extended discussion and analysis. Much has also been written and said about these various approaches, particularly those that involve capacity building and new program implementation. Perhaps the area that is least often considered is the set of conditions that influence the development of policy. I would therefore like to spend the rest of my time this morning talking about this area. Nearly 20 years ago, when I was a relative newcomer to our profession, I had the good fortune to be invited by Michael Begab to a conference on the sociology of mental retardation. At this conference, the gifted sociologist Amitai Etzioni made an interesting observation about the relationship between "special interest" concerns, such as the field of disability, and the broader concerns of society as a whole. He admonished us to avoid myopia, lest we become so caught up in our narrow concerns that we neglect to understand and respond to the broad social problems and issues that exert great influence on our society as a whole. He used the metaphor of attempting to cross the ocean in a 16 foot wooden boat with a 10 horsepower motor. In order for such a voyage to have even a chance of being successful, one must move with the waves and not against them.

If Etzioni was correct in his thinking, in order for us to make significant headway with the problems of transition for young adults with disabilities, we must first understand the broad social issues that have an impact, or a potential impact, on our narrower set of concerns. As one way of addressing this purpose, I spent a three month period about a year ago doing a very informal study of "relevant social issues". My method involved reading newspapers and news magazines very carefully, and cutting out and collecting anything that seemed in any way relevant to me at the time. I eventually gathered several hundred clippings, and did an informal content analysis of my collection. I have chosen to present one of the issues that emerged from this analysis to illustrate the influence of our broad social context on policy development that pertains to transition for students with disabilities.

Educational reform. There are any number of current social issues that might be examined. Such issues include educational reform, our current health care crisis, increasing levels of poverty in our children, the movement of our society towards increased ethnic diversity, and the growing social implications of financing and managing our Federal budget deficit. The issue I have chosen to explore is our current national interest in educational reform.

Much has certainly been written and discussed on this topic over many years. In collaboration with the National Governors' Association, a recent framework for crystallizing at least some of the major concerns was provided by President Bush in his 1990 State of the Union message. As part of this message, he outlined his preference for six national goals to be met by the year 2000. These goals include the following:

1. Every American child must start school prepared to learn, sound in body and sound in mind.

2. The high school graduation rate in the U.S. must increase to no less than 90%.

3. All students in grades four, eight and twelve will be tested for progress in critical subjects.

4. American students must rank first in the world in achievement in mathematics and science.

5. Every adult must be a skilled, literate worker and citizen, able to compete in a global economy.

6. Every school must be drug free and offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

As I speak this morning, Lamar Alexander, the current Secretary of Education, is presenting a new 44 point plan to embellish these goals.

Many of these goals have either clear or potential relevance for the transition programs that are of concern to us. We are concerned about functional illiteracy, and approximately 20% of the entire adult American population is unable to perform basic math calculations and/or read at a rudimentary level of effectiveness. We are concerned about high school drop-outs, and approximately 30% of all American students drop out of school. The commonality of concerns is easy enough to identify, and the examples that emerged in the news clippings were quite numerous. Of these examples, five topics seemed to have particularly important ramifications for our narrower set of interests. These topics included the following:

1. Should vocational apprenticeship programs, such as those found in Germany, be developed as a strong and viable alternative to the college preparation programs that are the cornerstone of high schools in our country?

2. Should the federal government get into the business of determining and measuring minimum educational competencies?

3. Can all students be educated together, or is some sort of tracking system desirable?

4. Should schools be the instruments of social reform, or should they stick to the business of education?

5. What should be the role of parents in dealing with the education of their children?

Let's start with Vocational apprentice programs. Although vocational education programs in the United States have a long history of their own, some interesting aspects of the vocational apprentice program in Germany have received recent public attention from the national syndicated columnist, William Raspberry, who visited these programs along with a contingent of educators from Indiana. He introduces this topic with his perceptions of the haphazard manner in which many American youngsters begin their work careers.

> **Typically, they leave high school to look for work wherever they can find it -- sometimes with help from family friends, sometimes going full time into jobs in which they worked part time during high school. Only after a succession of random jobs, it seems, do they stumble upon something with real career potential -- a permanent job with clear prospects for advancement that pays enough to support a family.... The delayed transition to adulthood signals to the youngsters that, no matter what we say, there is little real relationship between what they learn in school and their ability to make their way in the world.**

Raspberry then presents his viewpoint which praises the potential of Germany's apprentice program to address these issues that he has raised. The essence of this program, as he reports it, involves a refocusing of the last 2 or 3 years of public education to include 3 or 4 days a week pursuing an on-the-job apprenticeship with only 1 or 2 days a week in the classroom. There are 380 apprenticeable skills in Germany, and the minimum competencies are standardized across the country. Government regulates the standards. Employers have no obligation to participate in the program.

But the employers do, in fact, participate. They pay for the cost of training even though there is no obligation, or even expectation, that the apprentice will continue to work for the employer who provides the training. "Employers consider the training expenses an unremarkable investment in the competency of Germany's work force and, therefore, an investment in their own long-term survival." Many companies train far more people than they have any possibility of ever hiring. Raspberry speculates that the employers are motivated to participate because they have real control over what is taught and how skills are taught. As for the value of this approach, he asks rhetorically, "Who would you rather have teach your child a job: a master craftsman or a school teacher?"

The extended involvement of the business sector in the educational enterprise is a topic of intensifying discussion in our country, with many businesses expressing a strong interest in participating. As we continue to explore new and innovative ways for businesses to become integrally involved in the education of all students, it is likely that new models and opportunities will emerge that provide good opportunities for students with disabilities. Such a new model is, in fact, being seriously explored at this very moment.

Only two months after the columns by Raspberry appeared in our newspapers throughout the country, a policy analysis report was released by the National Center on Education and the Economy. This report was entitled, "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!" The authors conclude with a few perceptions of some very basic problems that must be addressed throughout our society. In their words,

- **More than 70 percent of all jobs in America will not require a college education by the year 2000.**
- **America may have the worst school-to-work transition system of any advanced industrial country. Students who know few adults to help them get their first job are left to sink or swim.**
- **Only 8 percent of our front-line workers receive any formal training once on the job, and this is usually limited to orientation for new hires or short courses on team building or safety.**
- **Education is rarely connected to training and both are rarely connected to an effective job service function.**

If we didn't know better, one might think that these words had been written to specifically address the needs of the people with disabilities whom we serve. Consider next the solutions that they propose:

1. A comprehensive system of technical and professional certificates and associate's degrees should be created for the majority of our students and adult workers who do not pursue a baccalaureate degree.
2. All employers should be given incentives and assistance to invest in the further education and training of their workers. . .

3. A system of Employment and Training Boards should be established by federal and state governments, together with local leadership, to organize and oversee the new school-to-work transition programs and training systems we propose.

Two pieces of new legislation that would implement these recommendations are currently being reviewed by the Oregon legislature. It is very likely that other states either are now or will soon be considering innovations in this area. To continue with the imagery of Etzioni's metaphor, this may be a wave worth catching.

Federal Involvement in Minimum Competencies

There are many ways in which the Federal government has entered the business of education. Public Law 94-142 and the OSERS transition initiatives are obvious examples in our field. The minimum competency strand of general educational reform, however, has begun to explore the limits of federal intervention in education. In response to President Bush's goal of testing student achievement in grades 4, 8 and 12, the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) voted in December, 1989 to ask Congress for a substantial expansion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress test that it has been operating in our country for the past 20 years. The purpose of this expansion would be to develop new and better tests to address the president's goal. Opposition to this proposal has been strong, and from many sources including the National Parent-Teacher Association, the Council of Chief School Officers, the National Education Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The voices of opposition present several arguments. The multiple-choice formats that tend to dominate standardized tests measure only certain kinds of learning that emphasize fact recall. There are no commonly accepted definitions of minimum competency, which eliminates the possibility of a single standardized form of assessment. If the outcomes of such assessment are used to distribute sanctions and rewards, schools will slavishly pursue good scores regardless of their educational relevance.

The National Assessment Governing Board, of course, has some arguments of its own. Without accountability, it asserts, society has no way of evaluating educational outcomes. Furthermore, if schools are allowed to develop their own assessments, they will tend to set easy standards that make their programs look good.

It is too early to predict the outcome of this controversy. The potential impact on transition programs for students with disabilities is also uncertain. If a national competency assessment program is strengthened, will this result in a raising of minimum competency standards and increased difficulty in earning a high school diploma, thereby decreasing the number of special education students who can earn a diploma? On the other hand, would a good set of standardized measures help to provide a valid paradigm for evaluating the impact of instruction and distributing financial resources to educational programs, including special education programs? The eventual outcome of this debate will most certainly affect transition programs for students with disabilities.

Tracking and Mainstreaming

The issue of student tracking is not new to the field of special education. The concept of educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment was a cornerstone of PL 94-142, and the mainstreaming movement and regular education initiative have emerged as attempts to embody this concept. As we all know, these attempts have not been uniformly supported within special education, with both the success and appropriateness of such efforts being challenged, especially at the secondary level.

Concerns about "mainstreaming" have also emerged from the perspective of regular education. Within this context, the issue is often expressed as a concern about the appropriateness of "tracking" systems for organizing classroom instruction. A recent opinion presented by the syndicated columnist, Paul Greenberg, provides a perspective on this issue. He states:

> **The latest fad in Education is to eliminate "tracking", the grouping of students by ability. Such an approach might make sense to simple laymen like you and me, but the educationists have just about decided that it's ineffective -- not to say elitist, racist, fascist and possibly even old-fashioned. Can any more serious indictment be imagined?... The newest approach is to throw kids together regardless of ability or knowledge; it is assumed that the superior knowledge and skills of the sharpest will rub off on the rest. Uh huh. This is the kind of assumption that would make Pollyanna look like a hard-bitten cynic.... In the days of the one-room schoolhouse, older or brighter students often took charge of the younger ones, rather than being challenged by new material. It had its advantages, but not that many. Mainly it was a matter of necessity.... Are we, in the name of progress, headed back to that system? If so, you can be sure it'll be given some multisyllabic name (how does "cooperative learning" sound?) and hailed in educational journals as a great advance. *Educanto* marches on.**

Greenberg's stinging sarcasm is hardly a careful or fair evaluation of tracking or mainstreaming, but it does represent an important public perception that needs to be addressed. The issue gets even cloudier when we consider the legal requirement that tracking, if it is done, must be non-discriminatory. The basic concern that seems to be involved in this debate is how to achieve excellence in education for all students, while acknowledging that their needs, abilities, and educational goals are very diverse. In any case, it seems almost certain that decisions concerning tracking and cooperative learning in regular education will spill over into decisions concerning mainstreaming and the regular education initiative for students with disabilities.

Schools and Social Reform

One of the three columns written by Raspberry about the apprentice program in Germany raised an interesting companion issue about the role of schools as instruments of social reform. His beginning sense of this issue emerged from an awareness that amateur sports in Germany have no connection with educational institutions, which relieves the schools of any responsibility for such budget draining items as sports stadiums, uniforms and equipment for athletes, bands and cheerleaders, buses to transport these people to events, and coaches' salaries. He also noticed that German schools did not tend to support any form of school transportation, lunchrooms, or most extracurricular activities. His conclusion?

> **One of the reasons German youngsters seem more serious than ours is that German schools are more businesslike and career-oriented than ours. While there are exceptions, schools are for those who want to learn something and are not used as day care centers or personality enrichment programs.**

Schools in the United States, of course, tend to move in a completely different direction. Good schools are often viewed as those which "do it all". School personnel are expected not only to teach, but also to transport, feed, coach, counsel, advise and support student development in a myriad of extracurricular activities. Furthermore, schools are expected to play a major role in solving serious social problems such as drug abuse, child abuse, poverty, health problems and teen-age pregnancy.

For example, beginning last October, a new Federal law requires all teen-age parents on welfare to enroll in a high school completion program if they don't already have a diploma or a GED. Failure to comply will result in a dramatic reduction of welfare benefits.

These high expectations for our schools to serve as a major agent of social change are likely to remain intact for a long time. As the debate concerning school responsibilities unfolds, each decision to maintain or expand these multifaceted responsibilities will have obvious fiscal and programmatic implications. At some point, both money and energy will run out. Programs for students with disabilities will have to compete for both resources.

Role of Parents

The role of schools as agents of social change cannot be separated from the role of parents. The relationship is almost symbiotic; a partnership is most desirable, but whatever the schools don't do will be foisted upon parents, and vice versa. What, then, is a proper delineation of responsibilities?

Public sentiment seems to place a majority of this responsibility upon the schools. Columnist Mike Royko takes issue with this sentiment through a dialogue with his fictitious blue collar philosopher, Slats Grobnik.

> **"Where did President Bush find this dummy?"** asked Slats Grobnik, looking up from his newspaper.
>
> "Oh, let's leave poor Dan Quayle alone."
>
> **"I don't mean Quayle. It's this Secretary of Education."**
>
> "Ah, you mean Lauro Cavazos."
>
> **"Yeah, whatever his name is. What a klutz."**
>
> "That's a rather harsh appraisal. After all, the man is our nation's highest education official. Show some respect."
>
> **"Yeah? Haven't you read what he said about high school dropouts?"**
>
> "I know that it is considered a grave crisis, particularly among minority groups, so Bush has set up task forces to look into the problem."
>
> **"Nah, I mean the latest. This guy Cavazos went to one of these task force meetings and talked about whose fault it is that so many Hispanic kids drop out of school."**
>
> "I assume he blamed the school systems, as everyone does."
>
> **"Yeah, he mentioned that. But he didn't stop there. He started talking like a looney.... He said that it's not just the schools that aren't doing their job, it's the parents of the dropouts."**
>
> "I don't understand. Why are you calling him a dummy? You've been saying the same thing for years."

> **"I know, but I'm not the Secretary of Education, or the president, or a mayor or any other politician or mucky-muck. So it's OK for me to say it. But this stiff don't seem to know that what he said is a big no-no."**
>
> "But if he believes it to be true, and if you agree, why shouldn't he come out and say it?"
>
> **"You're as dumb as he is. I'll tell you why. Because this ain't the old days. We got a new set of rules now. When there is a problem -- or a grave crisis, like they call it -- you gotta blame society, or the government or the one I like the best -- the failure of institutions. You never blame people. But what this guy went and did is blame people. And that's against the rules. So that's why he's a dummy. He don't know how to play the game."**

Slats goes on to point out that politicians who don't play by the rules eventually lose their jobs.

Royko's blue collar philosopher may be onto something important here. If our needed educational reforms can only be accomplished with the assistance of parents, and if some parents want to abdicate this responsibility, and if policy makers are afraid or unable to confront the issue, many of the problems that currently bedevil the schools will remain unresolved. Students with disabilities will, of course, be caught up in the vortex of these unresolved problems, which must inevitably have an impact on the opportunities that are available within special education and transition programs, whether or not our parents are actively involved in these programs.

Summary

This short excursion into the area of educational reform is, of course, only one example of many general social concerns that set the parameters and conditions for the development of policy concerning transition programs in our field. A similar analysis of other concerns, such as our health care crisis, would undoubtedly yield other insights into policy issues that are likely to affect transition programs. The outcomes of such policy development will provide definite opportunities and limitations for structuring the changes that we are attempting to implement in our narrower field of concern.

Within this narrower field, we have already learned a great deal about how to improve our program capacity and how to implement specific programs that take advantage of this capacity. Our literature is full of many fine examples of such efforts. From the perspective and influence of broad policy, however, the transition movement of the 1980's may or may not be the program of the 1990's that will emerge to address the needs of adolescents with disabilities as they prepare to move into adulthood. Such movements should be responsive to the broad issues and concerns of our general society and, as we have seen, at least three different movements have emerged in this area during the past 30 years. If "transition" eventually disappears as a rallying call for programs, however, this should be no cause for alarm. Something new will undoubtedly take its place, since many of the underlying problems being experienced by adolescents and young adults with disabilities are likely to remain in need of further attention. If necessary, the old wine will find yet another new bottle.

As for today, transition is still a very powerful movement that we can use to organize and focus our efforts on improving school and post-school services and the quality of life for adolescents and young adults with disabilities. The conference that has been organized here at Auburn will provide you with many opportunities to explore ways in which you can make a difference. Thank you for allowing me to participate in your process of discovery, and good luck in implementing the new ideas that excite you!

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The Transition Movement: Here We Go Again

Donn E. Brolin

The term "transition" was introduced by Madeleine Will in 1984 as an educational reform to help special education students to be better prepared for the movement from school to employment settings. Along with many others, her concern at that time was the abysmal outcome most students were experiencing after leaving the educational system.

Our country's concern about the plight of former special education and other students has existed for many decades. In 1971, the U.S. Commissioner of Education was so concerned about the drop-out rate of students in general that he introduced the concept of career education as an important federal thrust that needed to be instituted in American Schools (Marland, 1971).

Here we are again, twenty years later with the similar concern. Much has happened in the past three decades to intensify efforts to prepare students with disabilities for successful community living and working. Such efforts have included legislation, more money, instructional technology, more personnel, vocational assessment materials, adaptive equipment, computers, public awareness, and personnel training programs. But has the assimilation of students with disabilities into community life, independent living, and employment improved? Based on my knowledge, experience, and what research has been done on the topic, the answer is--**NOT MUCH!** In fact, Edgar (1988), after analyzing the outcomes of special education students in Washington State, concluded that the present curriculum appeared to have little impact on these students' adjustment to community life.

What are the Problems?

It does seem inconceivable that the adult adjustment outcome of former special education students is not much better today than it was thirty, twenty, and even ten years ago, given the rapid increase in money, personnel, services, materials, and knowledge that has occurred over this period of time. What are some of the reasons? The following are some of the problems that I believe still plague these individuals and those who are concerned about them. Possible solutions to each problem are also presented.

Inadequate Preparation by Schools

Most schools continue to emphasize academic skills development, leaving too little time for affective, social, vocational, and daily living skills training. These schools view all students as having equal needs and abilities. Therefore all students are taught the same subjects. The "inclusion" thrust has exacerbated this situation even more seriously by mainstreaming students into classes where they learn absolutely nothing except how to lower their self-esteem and confidence because they cannot keep up with the rest of the class. Most schools lack a definitive curriculum which will provide a logical scope and sequence for meeting the career development needs of these students.

Teachers, parents and citizens must take the initiative to influence administrators and school board members to support special educators in the institution of an educational approach that will blend together both academic and functional skills training related to the skills that will be required for community living, playing, working, and gaining friendships. If this cannot be provided in the regular classroom with support from special educators, other delivery settings must be utilized.

Limited Parent Involvement

Too many parents are still waiting for "the cure". Instead of being cured, many of the children become worse, i.e., 25-40% drop out of school, approximately one in five is arrested within two years of leaving school, few develop close or good friendships and many have limited social/recreational pursuits. Parents are needed to help facilitate their child's career development and to make changes in the educational system!

The school must take more time to involve parents meaningfully in their child's education, be receptive to their active involvement and suggestions, communicate more frequently and openly, help them to become more knowledgeable about their child's transition needs, solicit their help in involving other parents, and get their assistance in developing more community contacts.

Lack of Enough Community Partnerships

Although some schools have accomplished much in this area, local community resources, employers, volunteers, chambers of commerce, service organizations, and agencies are simply not utilized enough. These resources can provide classroom speakers, community-site supervisors, future employers of or advocates for the students, and be supporters of the efforts of the school staff in providing an educational focus that will prepare the students to become active, productive members of the community rather than a drain on it.

Schools need to really open their doors and request specific assistance form the various types of community resources in order to enrich the curriculum and instructional experiences of the students. Educators need to be given the responsibility and time to develop community resource relationships and determine how they can best be utilized. This requires a persistent and continual effort on the part of the school to maintain and develop such resources.

Limited Adult Service Agency Involvement

School personnel normally are not well-versed in the various types of agencies and their services as they relate to the transition area. Most school personnel have limited ability and time to conduct career/vocational assessments, career guidance and counseling, family counseling, job analysis and development, job placement and the like. Most special educators are not trained in these areas, yet the transition concept requires their participation. Agency personnel need to be involved in the transition planning process, offer periodic presentations to students, help educators understand the needs of employers, assist in curriculum modification, identify community resources, and help develop community placements.

Agency administrators must commit enough staff and time to provide the school and its students with needed services rather than waiting until the students are about ready to leave or drop out. It is critical, in transition planning, to be involved during the formative years (age 14 up) so that each student's program is really geared to a successful transition from school to vocational training and/or successful community participation and employment.

The Reluctance to Change

This actually may be the major reason transition and other educational reform efforts fail. Why should anyone change their approach to administering programs, teaching, counseling, case managing, or whatever if it is contrary to what they were taught or believe in? It is human nature to resist anything new, especially if it is significantly different and difficult to implement.

This is a tough one. You can't force professionals to change overnight; rather, it must be done carefully, cooperatively, and slowly. Each person must have the opportunity to study and consider the change being promulgated, and then if reasonable, to provide input on how such changes can occur. There must be support, cooperative planning, modifications, and the time to learn how to effectively change.

In summary, these are five major problems that I believe impede most innovation's implementation. Certainly there may be others, e.g., lack of money, poor communication, professional rivalries, bureaucracy, and so forth. But, if these five barriers can be resolved, then it should be possible to begin implementing a comprehensive transition program.

The Good News

The good news is that much has happened recently to make us believe that the transition concept has a good chance to become a reality across the country. Some of the indicators of this are presented below.

Legislation passed in the 1990's

The new Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act, now called IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), has two important additions crucial to the transition movement. The first is the inclusion of transition as an important educational service for special education students. The law requires that there be transition objectives in the IEP and that transition planning begin at least by age 16 or, in many instances at age 14 or younger. Involvement with other agencies is also mandated. The second important feature is the inclusion of rehabilitation counselors as a related service. This means that school will either employ rehabilitation counselors or begin to use rehabilitation services more than ever before.

The Transition Institute at the University of Illinois

This national center has been in existence for approximately five years and continues to provide leadership and direction for many schools across the country which are attempting to implement the transition concept. Many research, technical assistance, and publication activities are being conducted by the Institute. In addition, their outstanding annual conference brings together hundreds of personnel throughout the country who are implementing the concept of transition in their school and facilities to share their work with others.

Changes at the State Level

Many state departments of education are becoming committed to transition and have employed transition coordinators and passed transition legislation. For example, in Iowa, an Iowa Transition Initiative Model has been developed for the purpose of coordinating transition efforts across agencies to ensure consistency and opportunity for all students with disabilities to think about and plan for their futures. The present federal initiative to award cooperative grants to state special education, VR, (or other) agencies is another indication that a greater attempt at transition is forthcoming in many states.

Changes at the Local Level

Changes at the state level can bring about changes at the local level. While the field has a long way to go, there are indications that some school programs are moving in this direction despite the strong "inclusion" or total mainstreaming push that is sweeping the country at the present time. For example, one school administrator in North Carolina recently called us and said that they had totally scrapped their curriculum and were instituting and exclusively transition/functional skills curriculum (Life-Centered Career Education). This change is starting significant momentum throughout the country as educators realize their students need a different approach.

Transition Literature and Conferences

There have been several books, journal articles, and monographs written on the topic of transition in the past few years. It is important to develop a body of knowledge and conduct research activities to provide direction to the concept. Conferences like this are also important because they provide interaction to find out what others are doing and to increase motivation and effort. I must warn you, however, that we have had conferences like this since 1984 and, in many cases, not much has happened afterwards! So, the indicators are here once again that the opportunity to change exists. The next question is, are we really interested in and able to make these changes so that a transition program can be implemented at the state and more importantly the local level?

What is transition?

Perhaps the best way to introduce my concept of transition is to identify what it is not. Transition is not simply a coordination of services, the time which the student moves from school to work, a focus on only employment goals, a set of interagency agreements, just a high school initiative, or only special education's responsibility. Rather, transition should consist of three major components:

- A process-oriented educational program (K-12) which is organized to provide school, home, and community-based instruction experiences that will teach students the skills, behaviors, and attitudes needed for successful adult living, interacting with others, and working;
- involvement of all relevant community service agencies that are needed during the course of the student's educational program, at the time of exit if further training or placement are required, and in the first few years after training and/or placement assistance; and
- a follow-along support system that is available to former students during periods of adjustment difficulties.

In the above concept, the focus is on thinking and planning for the student's transition the moment the student starts school. This will enable the student to develop the skills that will be needed for employment, in becoming a productive family member and citizen, and to become involved in meaningful leisure/avocational pursuits, and to develop satisfactory friendships. This will require a systematic and focused educational program that continually addresses the functional skill needs of the student as she/he also learns important basic academic skills.

Earlier I mentioned that most special education programs really do not have a specific curriculum in which a comprehensive transition focus can be instituted. Let me describe to you the **LIFE-CENTERED CAREER EDUCATION (LCCE) CURRICULUM** which hopefully will capture you interest as one approach worthy of consideration.

The Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Curriculum

The LCCE Curriculum evolved in the 1970's during the early years of the career education movement that served as the educational reform thrust for all students during that decade. Special educators viewed career education as a vehicle by which a closer alliance with regular education could occur and a more functional skills approach could be instituted. The expanded concept of "career" (i.e., that one's career is multifaceted and includes all the important work roles one does in a lifetime, paid or unpaid) considered all the important roles an individual engaged in as a productive citizen (Hoyt, 1975). Hoyt (1977) emphasized that the word **work** included productive use of leisure time and the unpaid activities of the volunteer, homemaker or family member and student.

This broader view of a career education focus in the schools was adopted by many of us in special education because of its "whole person" approach. Some of the major downfalls of special education students during and after they left the educational system were their difficulties in the daily living and personal-social areas. Thus, the need for a curriculum that included all important components to teach students these "whole person skills" within a career education context became apparent.

The LCCE Curriculum was one such endeavor that emerged from this period and has steadily grown in its acceptance and adoption throughout the country. It was first published in 1978 by The Council for Exceptional Children (Brolin, 1978); subsequent editions have been published in 1983 and 1989. There are three major features of the LCCE model that make it unique and yet consistent with the transition/functional curriculum concept that is currently being promulgated throughout the country. These are: (a) 22 major competencies, (b) four stages of career development, and (c) three instructional settings.

Unlike conventional education which generally focuses on teaching students knowledge about such subjects as history, economic, and political science, LCCE is a process education approach which has attempted to focus on the important cognitive, affective, motor, social, daily living, and vocational skills needed for community functioning. Twenty-two competencies have been identified as critical for students to learn if they are to become productive and successful community citizens and employees. The 22 competencies and their 97 subcompetencies, which fall under three curriculum areas: Daily Living, Personal-Social, and Occupational.

The second feature of the LCCE Curriculum model is four stages of career development. These stages, which lend themselves nicely to the transition concept, require that educators present instruction and learning experiences in a logical and developmental manner beginning with career self/awareness activities during the elementary years. A series of hands-on, experiential career exploration opportunities during the late elementary and junior high years follows. In the late junior high years proceeding through high school, a wide variety of career preparation or skill building opportunities are to be taught. The last career development stage-career assimilation--similar to the last two transition components introduced earlier, is intended to emphasize careful career placement, follow along, and support LCCE services until successful adjustment has occurred for the former student.

The third feature of LCCE is its emphasis on the involvement of home and community settings as well as the school for career education. Although this is not an easy matter, it is clear that these two components of a successful transition approach are an absolute necessity if students are going to be prepared for adult living and employment. Next year, CEC will be publishing an extensive set of assessment and instructional materials that we have been developing and field-testing over the last few years which will give educators further guidance on what and how this important component can be implemented.

Many professionals believe LCCE is the most comprehensive curriculum available in the field. Educators are especially appreciative of the competency matrix/grid which provides them with a framework from which they can build a functional skills approach for their students. The basic curriculum guide, Life-Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approached,(Brolin, 1989) is available from CEC. Besides the upcoming new materials mentioned previously, CEC has selected LCCE as one of its five training Academies wherein school districts can request LCCE training, send staff to regional workshops, or pre-CEC National Conferences where the Academies are offered.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Six years ago, I was one of the keynote speakers at a large four-state regional conference on transition in Kansas City, Missouri. I referred back to my speech at that conference after writing this speech. It was amazing! I should have just used it over again! It must have been somewhat appropriate because the state director of VR came up to me and said,"Donn, it sounds like you know something"(--a supreme compliment)!

Reading back through my speech I was somewhat saddened because much of what I was suggesting hasn't really come to fruition. One of the most disheartening outcomes after the conference was our own Missouri Transition Task Force which met several times and then disbanded one year later. We did not achieve our goal of writing a state transition mandate and cooperative linkages among agencies. It reminded me of the story told by Madeleine Will when she delivered her transition speech at the 1984 CEC Conference. Ms. Will challenged the audience to find the will and the means to take up the transition challenge and to link up with all important reference to a wonderfully visionary speech by a state director of special education who

> **. . . called for improved services to older handicapped children and youth and argued strongly for increased coordination between rehabilitation, vocational education, and special education. He stated, 'There is no alternative to cooperation between vocational rehabilitation and vocational education and special education for the handicapped.' He called for increased attention to functional job skills for handicapped children and youth; more focus on vocational training; and for the proper sequencing of special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation in helping these students to become independent, vocationally competitive, and productive human beings** (Will, 1984).

Wasn't this state director right on target for what we are talking about today? The only problem is that the state director made this speech in 1969--over 20 years ago. Now you understand why I labeled this speech--"Here We Go Again!" Are we going to let another 20 years go by or are we finally going to really do the obvious for these students?

In the past six years we have made some progress. We have the National Transition Institute, the new transition mandate in the IDEA and also ADA, and several state departments and LEAs are moving in this direction. The CEC Division on Career Development is also providing an impetus at the national and federal level. However, much remains to be done, and it really all depends on you. You have got to believe this is a very important need and that changes can be made if you want to do it.

Let me tell you a true story. It's about a teacher who wanted her principal to give her good students just once so she could show him what an increase in student achievement she could effect with her outstanding teaching. But, the principal always gave her the less intelligent students. However, on the first day of school a couple of years ago she went to her new class and looked at the roster and about collapsed. She couldn't believe her luck. She scanned the roster and found this group of students to have IQ scores next to their names ranging from 125-145. She had finally struck it rich and was now going to demonstrate her teaching prowess! And the students did learn a great deal that year and scored very high on the end-of-the-year achievement tests. The teacher went to the principal somewhat arrogantly to report on her accomplishments and how she wanted students like this next year. Amazed, the principal stated, "I didn't give you any brighter students than before." She said, "How can this be, I saw their IQ scores and they ranged from 125-145." The principal replied, "Those weren't IQ scores, they were locker numbers--your class was another low functioning group."

We must believe that persons with disabilities can learn the skills to become successful and productive adults. Our expectations must be higher and our programs more in line with their learning or transition needs. You must have the will and the character to make the changes that are needed in the schools, the agencies, and in the work place. As Ms. Will said in her 1984 speech, "Let us pause and reflect, but not too long."

We have a real challenge before us. The educational reforms of the 1980's did not raise achievement levels, lessen the drop-out rate, or improve the employment rate of our students. Only 55% of special education students graduate from high school and less than half get any employment (National Transitional Longitudinal Study, 1988; W.T. Grant Foundation, 1988). Our country spends in excess of $150 billion for dependency annually and employers spend over $30 billion to train new employees who are not job ready after leaving school.

If you are going to take up the transition banner, I suggest you meet with those important decision-makers to present the case for transition, get their sincere support and willingness to make more flexible policy changes, decide on your transition approach and the curriculum that is needed, and begin the process of infusing the transition approach into the educational program with the active involvement of parents, agencies, employers,and significant others. It will take two or more years to make substantial progress but much can be done immediately. No one ever said it would be easy.

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"functional curricula", says Barbara, "is essential for . . "

"functional assessment", says Clarence, "is critical for . . "

Taking more notes

Ann presenting Mobile's transition model

"JTPA", according to
Alice Rodgers

Tom highlighting another
ITP step

Dr. Wilson, intensely listening

Cary asked, "Any questions?"

David presenting Dothan's
transition model

Connie talking about
job placement options

Pamela tells how community
based training must be . .

"The Carl Perkin's Act"
says Bob, "is the . . "

Dorthy sharing with Alabamians
what is happening in Georgia

Is this Bill's "Follow-up" or
"Family Involvement" session?

"In summmary"
Beverly contends,
"vocational education must. . ."

An Overview of Alabama's Response to the Transition Problem

Philip Browning, Mabrey Whetstone, and Cary Boswell

> **A key task of public schools in America is to successfully integrate each school-leaving generation into existing society, whether or not the students have handicaps . . . Through such efforts, OSEP's goal is to facilitate the movement of each student with a handicap from school/home environment to the fullest possible participation in the society at large.** Twelfth Annual Report of Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act, (1990, page 108).

The Problem

In 1975, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142), mandated that all school-aged children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education delivered in the least restrictive environment. With the first full generation of recipients now before us, however, we are confronted with the fact that the long-range goals of an "appropriate" education have been achieved only marginally. Follow-up studies of school leavers from special education, for example, have produced consistently discouraging findings, indicating high drop-out rates, high unemployment or underemployment rates, and a large number of people who are basically unengaged after leaving school.

Two outcome indices are offered to underscore the magnitude of the problem. The first of these alarming signals is the exiting status of high school students with disabilities. Nationally, 238,579 of these students exited the educational system during the 1987-1988 school year. Of these, 105,581 fell into the category of either drop-out (27%) or other or unknown (16%). Similarly, during the 1989-90 school year, 2,372 of Alabama's 5,875 exiting youth with disabilities were either drop-outs (21%) or fell into the unknown status (20%) (Twelfth Annual Report of Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act, 1990; FY 1989: DATA BOOK).

While the "unknown/other" category includes deaths and unreported transfers, a large portion of special education exiters in this category are believed to be drop-outs who never officially reported this status to the schools. Thus, "Dropped-out" and "Status Other/Unknown" comprise a comparable total of 43% and 41% of disabled school leavers from the Nation's and Alabama's secondary schools, respectively. The exiting problem can also be earmarked by the fact that the national graduation rate is only 53% for students with disabilities, whereas, it is 71% for students as a whole!

The drama of this story only becomes magnified when one is reminded that the above figures pertain to those youngsters who have "already" exited. In other words, what about the future of those who are next-in-line to exit, and those thereafter? As Table 1 indicates, this question currently relates to the transitional outcomes of 22,400 of Alabama's youth with disabilities between the ages of 15 to 21.

Table 1

Alabama's Youth (ages 15-21) with Disabilities: Exceptionality by Educational Region (N = 22,400)

REGION	EMR	TMR	EC	SLD	OTHER	TOTAL
I.	301	42	29	744	51	1167
II.	642	116	191	1683	138	2770
III.	487	77	132	1010	100	1808
IV.	1027	157	70	871	129	2254
V.	1007	150	409	1708	409	3683
VI.	786	89	52	659	68	1654
VII.	403	56	21	384	23	887
VIII.	758	90	20	261	53	1182
IX.	740	107	23	428	72	1370
X.	693	98	62	505	52	1410
XI.	846	185	221	1196	184	2632
XII.	718	76	56	676	59	1585
(as of December 1, 1990)						22,400

In Alabama, the size of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) within the State's 12 Educational Regions is a matter of concern as well, due to the large number of rural counties. As Fairweather (1989) concluded from his national survey of secondary programs in LEAs, for example, the size of the LEA is strongly related to the likelihood that secondary-aged students with disabilities will find vocational preparation programs available to them.

In addition to these appalling exiting statistics, the status of employment is another major dilemma facing this nation's youth with disabilities. A study conducted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1983), for example, found an unemployment rate approaching 50-78% for individuals with disabilities. Supportive evidence for these figures is provided from a Harris telephone poll (presented to the Senate Subcommittee of the Handicapped on February 21, 1986). From the results of the 1,000 persons with disabilities surveyed, it was estimated that 67% of all Americans with disability, between the ages of 16 and 64, are not working. Also, it was learned that if such individuals are working, 75% of them are likely to be employed only part-time.

In summary, the long-range outcome(s) of 16 years of P.L. 94-142 has been less than desirable for a large portion of this Nation's (and Alabama's) youth with disabilities. Not only is their graduation record dismal, but the economic problems with which they are faced are both "significant" and "pervasive." And, in addition to the startling unemployment and underemployment statistics, there is substantial evidence to indicate that they (school leavers) often

> **. . . experience additional difficulties with their community adjustment, including inappropriate living conditions, inadequate financial resources, restricted opportunities for post-secondary education opportunities, and a myriad of personal and social problems ranging from being victimized to experiencing strong feelings of loneliness that stem from the lack of a well-structured and satisfying social network.** (Halpern, 1990, p. 13)

The Definition(s)

Transition is the term that has been used to characterize the nation's response to this major problem of preparing its youth with disabilities for a productive and successful life beyond school. Initially, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services defined transition from school-to-work life as:

> **. . . an outcome oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. Transition is a period that includes high school, the point of graduation, additional post secondary eduction or adult services, and the initial years of employment. Transition is a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the risks of adult life . . .** (Will, 1984, p. 2).

Of course many other definitions have resulted since that time (e.g., Wehman, et al, 1986), one of the more referred to being the one offered by Halpern (1985). His is an alternative model to OSEP's definition, in that it is based on a core premise that living successfully in one's community should be the primary target of transitional services. Thus, in addition to employment, the two additional dimensions of community adjustment included in his definition are (a) the quality of a person's residential environment, and (b) the adequacy of one's social and interpersonal network. The rationale for this expanded definition is that research on the intercorrelations of these three dimensions (i.e., employment, residential, and social network) suggests that success in one area is often unrelated to success in either of the others.

While these and other definitions differ to some degree, there are specific elements of transition which are inherent in most all such definitions. Specifically, these critical elements are (a) appropriate longitudinal vocational training throughout the student's career, (b) cooperative and collaborative interagency transition planning and service delivery, (c) parent, student, and employer involvement in the transition planning process, and (d) community and professional awareness and support of multiple employment options by all (Alabama Guidelines for Transition, 1987, p. 5).

Alabama Meeting its Needs

In 1983, a State Transition Task Force was formed to guide Alabama's transition efforts. This Task Force currently consists of representatives from (a) the state level of Vocational Education, Special Education Services, Rehabilitation Services, and Mental Health/Mental Retardation; (b) the local school level of Vocational Education, Special Education Services, and Rehabilitation Services; (c) local school principals; (4) the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; (d) parents; (e) advocacy organizations; (f) teacher training institutions; (g)business and industry; (h) consumers; and (i) rehabilitation facilities. However, statewide cooperative interagency transition efforts did not officially begin until September 10, 1984, with the signing of the "Agreement of Cooperation" between the Division's of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), Vocational Education (DVE), and Special Education Services (DSES), all divisions within the Alabama State Department of Education. The stated goals of this agreement are to cooperatively plan and conduct activities that will provide leadership to, and encourage innovation by, local agencies in implementing an effective transition process.

Also beginning in the early 1980's, the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) established mobile evaluation units for vocational assessment of secondary transitional students. By the start of the 1986-87 school year, every secondary school in Alabama had access to vocational assessment through this service. Also, in 1985, DRS began developing formal agreements of cooperation with local school systems in an effort to provide quality transition services to secondary students with disabilities. By the start of school year 1987, DRS had signed agreements of cooperation with all 139 local school systems in Alabama.

In the Fall of 1985, six regional interagency workshops, co-sponsored by the Divisions of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Vocational Education, were completed throughout the State. The purposes of these workshops were to (a) disseminate transition guideline drafts for review and feedback, (b) provide information concerning the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies, (c) discuss pertinent legislation affecting transitional issues, and (d) discuss the logistics of providing services to students with disabilities among the three agencies. A total of 588 interagency personnel attended these six regional workshops, which included representation from all 129 Alabama local school districts and all vocational rehabilitation area offices.

In April, 1986, transition policies and procedural steps were included in the Division of Special Education Services Administrative Policy Manual, which was adopted by the State Board of Education. This manual is currently being updated to include recent federal requirements for transition mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act P.L. 101-476 passed by Congress in 1990. Also in 1986, Alabama was one of three states nationwide selected to attend training at the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. This activity, which was sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education, was designed to train leading school system personnel and adult services providers to prepare them to successfully move students with severe disabilities from school to employment.

In 1987, the three State Divisions (i.e., DSES, DRS, and DVES) jointly developed the Alabama Guidelines for Transition manual. By December 1987, these Guidelines were disseminated to all secondary special education teachers, special education coordinators, local school system superintendents, vocational rehabilitation counselors and staff, vocational education staff, and other appropriate personnel. Since that time, the vocational rehabilitation agency has increased its transition student caseload by 32%.

Cooperative transition efforts between Rehabilitation Services and local school systems have steadily increased in recent years. Since 1987, for example, (a) the number of transition clients has increased from 9,216 students to 13,560 students for a 47% increase; (b) transition students have made up approximately 30% of the total number of individuals served by DRS; (c) 25% of successful rehabilitations have been transition clients; and (d) DRS has contracted with the Dothan City School System to develop a model school based Supported Employment Program. Also, the vocational rehabilitation agency has developed a Job Readiness Curriculum, which is currently being taught to secondary students in the local high schools around the state.

Alabama's current Transition Initiative says that "High school work-experience will be established throughout Alabama". As a result, vocational rehabilitation has committed to initial steps working cooperatively with the schools to pilot community-based work experience programs into secondary curriculum. Of course, other vocational program options also need to be actively pursued and developed in local communities, such as the Private Industry Councils (PICs), Job Training Partnership Act Programs (JTPA), and local branches of employment agencies. Also, the vocational rehabilitation agency is currently developing and training counselors in the use of all applicable work incentives to employers and youth with disabilities. All persons participating in transition planning must be aware of (a) all social security work incentives, such as Impairment Related Work Expenses and Plan for Achieving Self-Support to Achieve Self Sufficiency and (b) all available employer incentives to hire workers, such as Targeted Jobs Tax Credits, and the positive work and safety records of workers with disabilities.

During the summer of 1990, the Division of Special Education Services sponsored three workshops on work instruction/functional curriculum conducted by national consultants, including Dr. Andrew Halpern, University of Oregon, and Dr. Philip Browning, Auburn University. Participants included special education teachers and coordinators, rehabilitation counselors, and state DSES and DRS specialists.

During the 1990-91 school year, state awarded grants totaling approximately $110,000.00 were funded by the Division of Special Education Services to 19 local transition teams. The purpose of these grants was to encourage local education agencies (LEAs) to develop school and community-based work instruction as one option within the special education/vocational curriculum.

Finally, in May 1991, Alabama was one of 49 states to submit a grant application for national funding under the State Systems for Secondary and Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities Program, U.S. Department of Education. Unfortunately, Alabama was not one of the twelve states to be awarded. Nevertheless, the Division's of Special Education Services and Rehabilitation Services again plan to jointly submit for this five-year, $489,000.00 per year grant in 1992.

Summary

In summary, Alabama is highly committed to the area of transition for students with disabilities. This commitment is underscored in the two quotes presented below. The first one is taken from Alabama's guidelines on transition and the second one from Dr. Wayne Teague, the State's Superintendent of Education.

> **The key to appropriate, effective, and smooth transition from school to community living and employment for students with handicaps/disabilities lie in (a) interagency cooperation and collaboration, and (b) total community "ownership" and participation in the transition process. The transitional process, like a chain, is only as strong as its weakest link. Special Education, Vocational Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation must provide appropriate services to the handicapped/disabled students/clients they work with; however, other community service providers, community businesses and industries, parents and other community citizens must also become fully participating partners in the transition process if appropriate community living and employment opportunities are to become a reality for the handicapped/disabled population of Alabama** (Alabama Guidelines for Transition, 1987, p. 5 and 6).

All divisions of the Alabama State Department of Education . . . are absolutely committed to moving forward in our state's transition efforts on behalf of students with disabilities . . . To me, transition is *more than just a service, a program, or a federal requirement.* Transition is a systematic way for everyone (state and local school personnel, agency personnel, parents, consumers, employers, and university personnel) working with students to join forces and create employment, independent living, and community participation opportunities for all students. Transition is a way to truly bridge the gap between the school the world of work, and the community at large.

Transition in Alabama: A Plan for Further Action!

Philip Browning, Cary Boswell, and Mabrey Whetstone

The mission of Alabama is to increase the state's capacity to both improve and expand upon its transition services, programs, and options now available, in order to more efficiently and effectively meet the tremendous needs of its youth with disabilities. A major premise underlying this mission is that a systems change approach must be employed in order to help insure that change in capacity-building will in fact occur. The remainder of this paper is devoted to presenting a blueprint for action, which consists of five areas, including (a) An Interagency Plan, (b) A System for Local Transition Teams, (c) Functional Programs and Practices, (d) Professional (and significant other) Development, and (e) A Follow-Along System.

An Interagency Plan

> **Cooperative planning for transition must address the entire transition process by coordinating services provided by preparatory programs (secondary schools), linkage resources (public, private agencies and parents) and community receiving environments (work settings, post-secondary education programs, and residential facilities)** Stodden and Boone, 1987. p. 538).

Interagency cooperation and planning is certainly a critical, systems change area that must be addressed. According to Edgar, Horton, and Maddox (1984), for example, a number of obstacles against effective transition services include: (a) inconsistent organizational patterns across agencies, (b) discontinuity in the geographic areas covered by programs, (c) differing application procedures for service eligibility, and (d) varying planning cycles and fiscal years. Therefore, a coherent and consistent policy framework for action is required at all levels, including ". . . policy goals, understanding of service eligibility and entitlement requirements, commonly shared language and information among service delivery systems, and consensus on the type and scope of services provided within each level of the services delivery system. . ." (Johnson, Bruininks & Thurlow, 1987, pp. 522-523).

Both federal and state statutes mandate interagency collaboration that will enable service agencies to determine the effectiveness of transition-related programs/services (Stodden and Boone, 1987, p. 537). Furthermore, Alabama's acknowledgment of the importance of this need area is reflected in its Alabama Guidelines for Transition (1987), which states that "The key to appropriate, effective, and smooth transition from school to community living and employment for students with disabilities lies in interagency cooperation and collaboration. . ."(p. 5).

Alabama has taken active steps in developing and implementing a plan of interagency cooperation and collaboration. For example, the vocational rehabilitation agency has signed cooperative agreements with all 130 local education agencies (LEAs) in Alabama, as well as assigned a vocational rehabilitation liaison counselor to every secondary school in the state. One major result of these cooperative efforts between vocational rehabilitation and special education is that the transition caseloads in rehabilitation have increased from 9,216 students in 1987 to 13,560 students in 1990. This rise of 4,344 transition cases represents a 32% increase in vocational rehabilitation services to transition cases over a four year period.

In spite of the positive steps Alabama has taken in addressing this critical area, its current interagency cooperative plan must be re-examined, subjected to an on-going review process, and evaluated periodically at the local level in terms of its implementation (or lack thereof). As noted by Johnson, et al (1987), "Too frequently, the positive intentions and initial cooperative planning efforts are aborted because key agency personnel lack needed skills, subvert strategies toward coordination of services to protect existing administrative prerogatives, and/or fail to adhere to proven planning methods" (p.523).

Also, in order for a state's interagency plan to result in substantial change in improving service planning and interagency cooperation, it needs to be based upon valid and tested planning/organizational models and effective management practices. One systematic way to evaluate and improve upon the quality of a state's interagency plan is through its implementation at the local level, which is the second critical need area.

A System for Local Transition Teams

> **The key to appropriate, effective, and smooth transition from school to community living and employment for students with disabilities lies in total community "ownership" and participation in the transition process** (Alabama Guidelines for Transition, 1987, p. 5 and 6).

While one of the initiatives in the new, 1990 amendments to P.L. 94-142 is a focus on planning in terms of the individual, another one indicates how there must be improvements in planning for program capacity in order to support the service needs identified for individual plans. Alabama's philosophy for improving its capacity to deliver effective programs and services in order to produce successful outcomes is that there must be total community "ownership" and participation in the transition process (Alabama Guidelines for Transition (1987). Specifically, Alabama's current Transition Initiatives state that "Local transition teams will be established to promote interagency cooperation and planning and to advise the LEA(s) with respect to the development and maintenance of quality transition planning".

Because of Alabama's commitment to the local team approach to service delivery in transition, the Division of Special Education in 1990, selected 19 local school systems to serve as "local" pilot transition projects, and funded them with incentive grants totaling

$110,000. The results of these local team demonstration sites have been so successful that the state has now elected to implement the local team approach to the greatest extent possible.

In addition to expanding the network of local transition teams in Alabama, consideration currently is being given to incorporating a system for local teams. The model (Halpern, 1990) being considered for incorporation into the state is referred to as the Community Transition Team Model (CTTM). The model, which is currently being used in five other states, has a number of features including standards, procedures and materials for implementation in local communities by the transition team. The standards component includes 38 performance transition standards, which provide structure for responding to the identified needs resulting from a needs survey. Also, for this local team approach, a set of materials has been developed, field-tested, and refined: Community Transition Team Model: Team Leader's Manual; Community Transition Team Model: Needs Assessment Instrument; and Community Transition Team Model: Management Information System Manual.

Functional Programs and Practices

In order to identify needed areas of program improvement and practice, a statewide study is currently being conducted in Alabama, with the endorsement of Dr. Wayne Teague, State Superintendent of Education. Specifically, two survey forms have been developed and sent to (a) all 130 Local Coordinators of Special Education, and (b) a stratified sample of 700 secondary special education teachers. The six categories being surveyed are: (a) curriculum and instruction, (b) program coordination and mainstreaming, (c) transition planning, (d) documentation of student outcomes, (e) administrative support for transition programming, and (f) adult service options. Of course, the results of this effort will provide a building-foundation for responding to this need area of functional programs and practices.

Even though the study has yet to be completed, it is strongly anticipated that at least four of the areas in urgent need of program improvement will be (a) functional assessment, (b) functional curriculum/instruction, (c) an emphasis on self-advocacy/self-determination, and (d) a vocational/career focus. While there are other important areas that are likely to emerge as being in serious need of improvement, the above four have been selected here for brief highlighting.

Functional assessments refer to assessments that describe and define in specific and objective terms those skills within the student's repertoire that allow him or her to participate in a wide variety of integrated community environments (Falvey, 1989). This need for and importance of a functional assessment approach for secondary students in transition has been well documented (Browning and Brown, 1991).

It is important to note that the major problem with which we are faced pertains to the service providers' approach and orientation to assessment, rather than a lack of functional tools with which to practice. DeStefano & Markward (1987), for example, in their assessment of the current status of instrumentation for student assessment in transition programs, reported 144 assessment instruments derived from the transition projects funded by OSERS during the 1985-1987 period.

Functional curriculum refers to those curricula that facilitate the development of the skills essential to participate within a diversity of integrated environments (Falvey, 1989). In keeping with this definition, *Alabama's Guidelines* (1987) state that a curriculum should be composed of a variety of skills that influence a student's ability to perform as independently and productively as possible in an appropriate school, home, community, or employment environment. Nonfunctional skills, by contrast, are seen as those that have an extremely low probability of being required of a particular student in environments where the student has the potential to function; or, those skills which the student does not have the potential to adequately master. Also, Alabama's current Transition Initiatives state that functional academic curricula will be developed across four curricular domains (domestic, vocational, recreation/leisure, and community).

Like the area of functional assessment, the need for and importance of a functional curricula/instructional approach has been well documented (Browning and Brown, 1991). Also, the major problem is one of teacher, service provider orientation and practice, rather than a lack of functional curricula with which to teach and train.

The right to **self-advocacy/self-determination** is another area that must be stressed throughout the transitional preparation for youth with disabilities. One of the more recent indicators of its importance is reflected in the 29 self-determination recommendations, which resulted from a 1989 national conference sponsored by OSERS. The first of these recommendations stated that the top priority in all government policy should be the enabling of people with disabilities to determine their own futures (*Self-Determination*, 1986, p 6).

Our youth with disabilities must discover and exercise the right to speak out and be heard--the right to self-determination, to choice-making, to services, to consumer control, and to citizenship. It is only through self-empowerment conditions such as these that their level of human decency, pride, and sense of self-worth is immensely enhanced and independent living augmented. Unfortunately, such has been sorely lacking in our secondary programs. As noted by Mithaugm, Martin, Agran, & Rusch (1988, p. 29), ". . . opportunities to make choices, decisions, and express preferences are conspicuously absent from educational programs for persons who are handicapped."

Social Problem-Solving is one skill that needs to be taught in order to enable one to more effectively and independently manage and regulate one's own life. As stated by Mithaug, Martin, and Agran (1987), ". . . the core of a transition program should focus upon instructing students to solve problems independently. . ." (p 501). Of course, self-directed skills such as problem solving would enhance the ability of these students to plan, manage, and direct their own lives, and therefore exert greater control over their own destiny (Weisenstein & Elrod, 1987).

Not only are abilities (e.g., social problem-solving skills) important for self-determination but also the opportunities for one to make choices and decisions with respect to their own destiny. One promising opportunity for people with developmental disabilities, in particular, has been the self-help/self-advocacy movement called "People First" (Browning, Rhoades, and Thorin, 1984, Rhoades, Browning, and Thorin, 1986). Unfortunately, however, this movement has been limited primarily to those of post-secondary age. Clearly, it is ripe time that those students in transition also be provided the opportunity to participate in the self-advocacy movement (Browning and Rhoades, 1986).

A **vocational/career focus** is undoubtedly one of the more critical components needed for a transitional program. Its importance has been well documented with both vocational, functional assessment and vocational, functional curriculum programs. Again, the problem is not a lack of tools with which to assess and teach/train but rather the awareness, knowledge, and practice of the teachers/service providers. The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been especially responsive to this need area. For an account of these vocationally-related activities, the reader is referred to a number of the papers in the proceedings, including the one entitled "An Overview of Alabama's Response to the Problem of Transition."

Professional (and significant other) Development

> **Transition efforts to a large extent may be determined by the approach, success, and skills of the professional staff who are responsible for the delivery of transition services. Inservice training is the most efficient way to provide staff development to the personnel who find themselves with a mandate for providing transition services from P.L. 98-199 and from P.L. 98-524. In order to provide the necessary information required to implement transition services, a well-planned, comprehensive system of professional development is needed** (West, ND, p 141).

Another important component area for initiating a systems change in practice is through in-service training, which is targeted for personnel responsible for the delivery of transitional services. As West (1985) indicates, in-service training can only strengthen the transition efforts of LEAs through (a) improved communication among special education, vocational rehabilitation, vocational educational and other agencies, (b) cooperative programming among special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation, and (c) placement assistance for students with disabilities.

In response to this need area, Alabama, since 1986, has conducted 10 regional and/or state-wide workshops on transition from school-to-work for staff representing special education, vocational rehabilitation, and vocational education, serving over 700 interagency personnel. Also, more recently (April, 1991), a state-wide conference entitled Transitions in Alabama was held. This event, which attracted more than 200 participants, including parents, consumers, and employers, was a joint effort between Auburn University and the State Division's of Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Vocational Education. You are now reading the proceedings of that conference, which included as key note speakers two of the field's national leaders (i.e., Drs. Halpern and Brolin).

Clearly, teachers, rehabilitation and other service providers, parents, consumers, and employers must attain a high degree of awareness regarding the transition process and current transition efforts. In addition, they must help to disseminate this knowledge and assume leadership roles in order to accomplish transition objectives (West, ND).

A Follow-Along System

> **. . . effective service planning must be based on an ongoing and systematic evaluation of the postschool outcomes of individuals leaving education** (Johnson, Brunnicks, and Thurlow, 1987, p. 523).

A number of follow-up studies have been funded through the State Education Agency/Federal Evaluation Studies Program to (a) examine the impact of basic skills or minimum competency testing on students with disabilities, (b) determine the relationship between secondary programming and post-secondary outcomes, and (c) document the experiences of special education students as they exit from school.

Halpern (1990), in his review of follow-up studies for tracking school leavers in special education, noted that a total of 27 such studies have been concluded. The problem, however, is that in the 27 studies reviewed, only 7 of them indicated longitudinal (follow-along) intent in the design and not one of the studies reflected a strong "follow-along" strategy being implemented.

It is important here to note the distinction between the "follow-up" and "follow-along" approach. The first basic difference is that follow-up studies are cross-sectional and collect information on outcomes at only a single point in time; whereas, the follow-along approach is one which is longitudinal, collecting outcome information at multiple points in time. Second, follow-up studies are usually retrospective, collecting information at the same time that outcome information is collected; whereas, follow-along studies are prospective, collecting predictor information at one point in time and outcome information at subsequent points in time.

In response to this need area, Alabama needs to demonstrate the utility and impact of a follow-along system developed specifically for tracking school leavers with disabilities in transition. A follow-along system to be considered incorporates (a) reporting formats for presenting follow-along information clearly and effectively to intended users of the information, and (b) procedures for "linking" the follow-along information to the decision-makers (community transition teams) responsible for improving secondary education and transition programs (Halpern, 1990). This system includes five instruments, three of which address "in-school" components and two which assess "postschool" components of the follow-along model. Collectively, these instruments are designed to address a number of questions related to the areas of (a) Student, Family, and Community Characteristics, (b) School Services Received, (c) School Achievement, (d) Quality of life while in School, (e) Postschool Services Received, and (f) Quality of Life Out of School.

Of course, the availability of useful follow-along reports is necessary but not sufficient by itself for systems change (e.g., improving program conditions). Thus, in order for there to be a linkage between outcome results and program improvement based on those results, the information must be presented at a time in which such decisions are being made and in a manner that fits the decision-making process. And herein lies one of the benefits of the local transition team model, in that the outcome information derived can be channeled back into the community in which the local transition team resides.

In summary, the crucial components of a blueprint or "foundation" for effective transition have been well articulated in the literature. Typically, these crucial areas include such components as (a) interagency cooperation, (b) functional assessment/ curriculum, (c) community-based training, (d) formal individualized student plans, (e) local community support for effective transition programs, (f) parent involvement and consumer input, (g) employment, and (h) documentation (tracking systems) for determining the nature of the transition process and outcomes. The five need areas presented in this paper address these and other critical areas. Alabama can be proud of the fact that it has taken the initiative to develop and implement transition policy, programs and services that relate, at least in part, to these crucial components.

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Alabama's Movement Toward a Functional Curricula

Mabrey Whetstone

The Alabama State Department of Education is committed to moving forward in our state's transition efforts. First, the reader is introduced to two recent developments that have caused us to intensify our efforts on behalf of students with disabilities. Second, a brief description of the efforts being made in the state to provide its students in transition with a functional curriculum is presented.

Background

The high documented unemployment rates of persons with mild disabilities has been reported to be between 50% to 75%. The U.S. Census Bureau in 1989 reported that 67% of all Americans with disabilities were not working, compared to only 5% for non-disabled adults. At the present time, there is no reason to expect that Alabama residents with disabilities succeed any better in attaining and maintaining employment than the national estimates. As a result, we can expect that approximately 3,936 of the 5,875 students who left special education programs in Alabama last year are now unemployed, and we can expect that only 984 of these 5,875 work full-time (only one in four employed work full-time).

Across the United States, the National Council on Disability found that 40% of all persons with disabilities did not finish high school. In Alabama, 41% of students with disabilities exiting the public school system last year either dropped out or their status was unknown. We are convinced that the high unemployment and dropout figures for individuals with disabilities that have been reported nationally and in Alabama, **DO NOT** have to occur in Alabama, if appropriate services and transition activities are provided.

Over the past 10 years, Alabama, like almost every other state in the country, has increased high school graduation requirements in response to the call for "educational excellence". In the fall of 1991, Alabama will once again up-grade the competencies required to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam. The stress on excellence in academics has resulted in high school curriculums which typically attempt to remediate basic academic skills for special education students. Often overlooked in the rigid course offerings are critical functional curricula and learning strategies designed to prepare the student to function as independently as possible in all settings (school, home, community, employment). Because of real and imagined administrative and programmatic restrictions, however, functional skills, when taught at all, have often been taught in traditional classroom settings, rather than in their natural environments where they will be utilized by the student. While the secondary curriculum usually includes a vocational component, there continues to be emphasis on non-relevant "academics" as opposed to specific training in life activities, as well as employment and job-site instruction.

A Functional Curricula in the Making

It is the recognition of these problems in providing a meaningful educational program for many special education students that is the foundation of the Alabama State Department of Education's efforts to expand the capacity of local education agencies (LEAs) to provide transition activities. As a result, in the 1990-91 school year, 19 grants (about $5,000 each) have been funded by the Alabama Division of Special Education Services. Three of these funded programs are highlighted in these proceedings and are indicative of the impact of this recent effort (see papers on Dothan, Birmingham, and Jefferson County). The purpose of the grants has been to encourage LEAs to begin developing functional curricula and procedures and programs for school and community work instruction as one option within the special education/vocational curriculum for students with mental retardation. In June, a three-day workshop with representatives from each project will be conducted to review each project's progress and jointly develop a work instruction model that may be replicated across the state.

Work instruction is viewed as an extension of the classroom educational program. The philosophy behind the program is one of utilizing "work" instruction, coupled with related academic instruction, to assist young adults in the transition from student to worker. By providing students an opportunity to perform tasks and develop skills in a variety of actual work environments, the individual student is better able to develop appropriate work behaviors, habits, and job-readiness skills, as well as practice independent living skills. Based on this instruction, school personnel gather information regarding each student's vocational strengths, weaknesses, needs, and interests which are utilized, along with other assessment information, in making decisions regarding each student's secondary education program. The actual work instruction, plus the related academic instruction which reinforces or provides new skills, provides a comprehensive approach to prepare the individual student to live and work as a productive member of society.

Work instruction may be provided on several levels. At the prevocational level, students should be exposed throughout their school career to experiences that enhance career awareness, offer career exploration opportunities, provide "hands-on" activities, force decision-making situations, and develop appropriate work attitudes and behaviors.

At the non-paid level, work instruction provides student trainees a variety of non-paid instructional experiences in school-based instructional sites. Each site provides opportunities for vocational, functional academic, social, communication, and adaptive behavior skills training to occur. The student receives credit for this experience and performs instructional tasks under close supervision. Goals and objectives for work instruction are included in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Empirical data is gathered on each student to be used in functional assessment and in planning future instruction and placement needs. The number of hours of work instruction plus the number of hours of instruction in the classroom is not to exceed the normal academic day, nor is non-paid work instruction to be carried out on weekends or school holidays. All of the following Fair Labor Standards Act guidelines are followed to ensure non-paid trainee status of the student:

1. the training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school;
2. the training is for the benefit of the trainees or student;
3. the trainees do not displace regular employees but rather work under their close observation;
4. the employer who provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees, and on occasion the employer's operations may actually be impeded;
5. the trainees or students are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period; and
6. the employer and the trainees understand that the trainees or students are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

At the paid level, work experience focuses on mastery of a single job description. Work experience occurs at a site away from the school and is for pay at minimum wage. This transfers the student from trainee status to employee status and is under the same regulations as a work-study student. Students may receive one hour of credit for every 40 hours of work experience. Placement is based on information collected and analyzed during the student's non-paid work instruction. Paid work experience is a goal for students in this program and should be available minimally during the student's last semester in school.

Another important outcome of the state-funded grants is the increased emphasis on revamping the current secondary special education curriculum to more adequately include functional curricula. The focus of functionality should be across four curricula domains: (a) domestic, (b) recreation/leisure, (c) community, and (d) vocational. Secondary curricula should be designed to ensure that each student acquires competencies (skills) deemed essential to function adequately in the adult world. It is anticipated that the funding of these grants will provide the incentive for LEAs to critically examine their current programs and infuse more locally developed longitudinally planned functional curricula into them.

Summary

Special education students can, and do, make good employees and productive citizens. To ensure them the opportunity, special education and vocational education programs must provide **appropriate functional curriculums** that focus on independent living, social, vocational, and employability skills, and **actual work instruction and/or work experiences** as part of their secondary programs. By cooperatively working together to provide school-based work instruction through special education, and community work experiences through vocational education, rehabilitation services, and special education, we will have taken a major step toward students with disabilities contributing tax dollars, instead of being a drain on society.

A Work Instruction/Work Experience Program in Dothan

David Sprayberry, Teresa Holmes, Angie Sasser, and Gloria Stringer

The Dothan Public School System has developed a Work Instruction and Work Experience Program, the purpose of which is to facilitate the successful transition of students with disabilities from high school to post-secondary environments using a work instruction/experience model. This Program serves as one of three options for its students with mental retardation. The other two options are: (a) a regular curriculum leading to a high school diploma or a graduation certificate, or (b) a regular vocational education curriculum leading to a high school diploma or graduation certificate.

The Work Instruction/Work Experience Program, which is based on the Fair Labors Standard Act, has three levels. Work instruction (Levels I and II) provide student trainees a variety of non-paid training experiences in school based training sites; whereas, work experience (Level III) is provided at the end of the school based work instruction program. Students are then placed through Adult Rehabilitation Services in a paid employment position and become an employee instead of a trainee. Training in all three levels is built around a functional curriculum for secondary students with mental retardation.

Unlike traditional work-study programs, work instruction (Levels I and II) is a vocational instruction sampling program, not an employment program! Thus, when the guidelines presented below are implemented, students within a work instruction program are trainees rather than employees. As students move through a variety of vocational options, school personnel gather empirical information regarding each student's vocational strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes, and only when a student is placed in a paid employment position (Level III) does a change in status from trainee to employee occur.

Program Objectives

The objectives of this Program are to:

1. Establish a work instruction/experience advisory council composed of representatives from schools, rehabilitation services, vocational education, local business and industry, students, and parents. This council may also function as a local transition team.
2. Develop a transition component to the IEPs of students classified as being mildly or moderately mentally retarded for students involved in the project.
3. Develop students' schedules for the school year; ensure appropriate Carnegie credits for work instruction and work experience.

4. Reorganize staff time to enable a minimum of one teacher (work instruction teacher) at each school site release time, daily, to develop and monitor school based work instruction.

5. Identify one individual with overall responsibility of transition coordinator for the entire system.

6. Initiate planning to develop and implement a functional curriculum for all secondary students with mental retardation. Focus of the curriculum will be on successful post high school adjustment.

7. Develop internal work instruction and external work experience sites. School personnel will have primary responsibility for developing school based (internal) work instruction and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) personnel will have primary responsibility for developing community (external) work experience.

8. Determine training needs of personnel necessary to successfully implement the training plan. Transition coordinator will conduct the assessment and implementation of the training plan.

9. Evaluate the effectiveness of the project. The transition coordinator will design and conduct the evaluation.

10. Assist state education agency (SEA) personnel in replicating the project in other districts.

Work Instruction: Level I and Level II

Level I and Level II work instruction provide initial work instruction for students who need to develop essential work related skills, but who are not ready to be employed competitively and/or put in an uncontrolled and unsupervised work environment. School based work instruction may be provided in the student's home school (Level I) or in another school within the school system (Level II).

The student receives credit, but no pay, for this experience and performs instructional tasks under close supervision. Students rotate through different work instruction sites on a regular basis. The specific length of time at any one instruction site differs with different school and different students. Four to nine weeks are the likely rotation period. **NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED TO TRAIN ON ONE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR MORE THAN 90 DAYS.** Examples of such work instruction are placement in the school cafeteria or media center.

All students are instructed and supervised by appropriately certified teachers, the transition coordinator, or designated school system personnel, their level of need indicated by their individual student data. These levels are:

1. Direct supervision: one-to-one instruction by school staff.

2. Indirect supervision: school staff remains in area but may work with more than one student at a time.

3. Periodic supervision: school staff moves to other areas of the site and provides supervision to the student at regular intervals.

4. Non-handicapped co-worker: school staff is at the training site, but continuity of student work is supervised by co-workers of the business to ensure generalization of work skills. At this level, the student is working on independent performance criterion and staff is preparing to rotate the student to the next job description.

School-based work instruction stations simulate conditions of community job sites as much as possible. Before starting to work, students complete application forms and participate in job interviews. Once enrolled in training, they are expected to report for work instruction as scheduled and to perform tasks promptly and efficiently.

Training sites are identified by school personnel and a task analysis of each job is developed by the work instruction teacher. The following data should be collected on each student for each site and job description in which he/she trains: (a) work adjustment skills, (b) specific task acquisition skills, and (c) level of supervision required. In addition to these data, notation should be made of the types of environmental and job specific adaptations that are necessary for student task performance. These records from each training site are used to plan future training and provide information to assist with job placement.

Every two weeks the work instruction teacher, the job site supervisor, and the student complete an evaluation of the student's performance. Evaluation reports are discussed with the student and pertinent information shared with the appropriate teachers. The work instruction teacher and job site supervisor discuss any problems which occur and cooperatively deal with them.

Students are placed into training sites in which they are not skilled. Once a student reaches an independent performance criterion (as reflected in his/her data) on the job task, he/she is moved to a different site or transferred within that site to a different job description. A criterion may be stated, for example, at an independent level of performance for at least six consecutive sessions, or for six of eight sessions. The number of hours of vocational instruction is not to exceed the normal academic day, nor extend beyond the normal school day, nor to be carried out on weekends or school holidays. If a student holds a part-time job outside of school hours, no job training may occur within the same job description for which he/she is employed. The student is proficient in this particular skill and needs to expand his repertoire

Student trainees are not to supplant a regular employee, nor cause employees to have a reduction in hours. While on the site, the student may complete a variety of tasks; however, these will not equal the job description or work schedule of a regular worker. Students often perform only parts of a job rather than the complete job. At times, students may be paired so that two individuals "job share" in order to perform tasks. No employee's job description changes as a result of the training program. The training program, therefore, does not alter the crew structure of the business.

Students 16 and 17 years-old and younger may not be trained in power driven woodworking machines, exposed to radioactive substances, power driven hoisting and metal working machines, slaughtering or meat packing, power driven saws, or roofing and excavation operations.

Work Experience: Level III

An additional component to the work instruction program is the final phase of student placement into Level III work experience. The student's transition team comprised of the rehabilitation counselor, parents, the student when appropriate, school, and other adult services personnel, select and obtain a paid employment position. In this position, the focus is mastery of a single job description for continued employment. This transfers the student from trainee status to employee status, and is then under the same regulations as a work-study student. The Rehabilitation Service counselor has the responsibility for placing and monitoring students in the Level III work site. Placement is be based on information collected and analyzed during the student's Levels I and II work instruction program. The work instruction teacher works with the local DRS counselor by providing situational assessment and other data that may assist in a student/job match.

Level II work experience occurs at a site away from the school and is for pay. Students can work up to full-time during school hours in a supervised work experience setting for credit. Students receive one hour of credit for every 140 hours of work experience. Level III work experience is a goal for all students in this program and is available minimally during the student's last semester in school.

The transition coordinator works closely with the work instruction teacher, DRS counselor, and business representative (3) on the work instruction/experience advisory council to develop external work sites. Development of external work sites are a collaborative effort among these individuals to ensure proper contacts between the school and community. The DRS counselor has primary responsibility for developing these sites.

Finally, the local school system and participating business must sign a non-binding statement of understanding which outlines the parameters of the training program. The local school has its model statement cleared by the school superintendent/administration and school board attorney, as well.

A Supported Vocational Training Program in Birmingham

Pamella Hicks Parker

Many persons in the field of special education and rehabilitation have recommended changes in secondary programming to increase the likelihood of employment for individuals with mental retardation. Specifically, a shift in focus from an academic curriculum to a functional curriculum is recommended to improve student outcomes for employment. Such a curriculum includes employment-related vocational skills which are taught in community-based settings. There are many outcomes from such instruction that facilitate employment for individuals with mental retardation in the post-secondary years.

A community-based work experience program utilizes community work settings to improve outcomes for employment. It facilitates the acquisition of appropriate work behaviors, social skills, and work-related skills by providing practice and refinement of these skills across a variety of community work settings. Furthermore, such a program assists students in the development of realistic expectations and perceptions of work, as well as provides a vehicle for career exploration, determining vocational preference, assessing levels of student stamina, work quality, production, social skills, work habits and work skills. Experience in a community-based work setting also allows students in training to develop a work history and references which can then be used in future job placement.

In addition to these student benefits, participation in such a program provides documentation to adult service agencies, parents, and community employers that individuals with mental retardation possess vocational potential. This also helps to prepare parents of children with mental retardation for the reality that their child will have to adhere to company policies if the child is to work. Based on these expected outcomes, the Department of Special Education within the Jefferson County School System elected to develop a community-based work experience program for secondary special education students.

The Vocational Training Program

The Supported Vocational Training Program is a community-based work experience program based at Gardendale High School in Birmingham, Alabama. This Vocational Training Program primarily serves students (ages 15-21) in special education who have been identified as EMR and MMH, even though students with other exceptionalities have been served (e.g., TMR, EC, LD and OHI). The teacher in this program works in conjunction with other special education teachers by conducting units on employment related vocational skills and accompanying students to community-based job settings for work training.

Even though the program uses extensive community-based work instruction or a training externship, actual classroom instruction addresses work-related social skills, appropriate work habits, work skills (performing work brought into the classroom), and job acquisition skills (interviewing and job applications). This provides a vehicle for the supported vocational training instructor to observe and initially assess a student's grooming, social skills, work habits, and work skills. Such information is then used to match a student to an appropriate training site.

The training externship is conducted in community work settings with "real" work. Since it is an unpaid work experience, no paid workers in cooperating businesses should be displaced. The externship is time limited and may last from six to twelve weeks in duration, depending on the complexity of tasks to be learned and the progress of the student. Students may work two to three days a week for one-and-a-half to two hour shifts. Upon completion of an externship, a student will be scheduled into another community work setting for another training externship. Within this process, the student must participate in an interview with the employer. In addition, he/she must follow the rules and dress code of the work setting he/she is in.

The training externship is a part of the special education student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). As such, externships are scheduled during the school day (8:30 am - 2:30 pm) Monday through Friday. Students are transported to their work training site by a Jefferson County School bus that has been designated for use during the school day. A special education teacher's aide, who works part-time with the program and is a certified bus driver, transports the students. On occasion, students may be trained to walk to their work sites.

Since the Program is based on a supported employment model, the instructor in this program assumes the role of a job coach. This person accompanies the student to the work site and provides individual training that can consist of task specific skills, social skills, work habits, and crisis intervention. Gradually, the job coach fades from one-on-one training as the student is able to work independently. Of course, the ultimate goal is independence in performing the assigned job or jobs. As the student performs more independently, a designated supervisor in the work training site assumes more responsibility for the supervision of the student. However, the job coach continues to monitor the student to assist in any situation related to the student. Weekly or bi-weekly evaluations are completed by the supervisor in the cooperating business. These evaluations document the student's progress and alert the job coach to problems or potential problems that need to be addressed.

Contacting employers and job development is a vital part of the Supported Vocational Training Program and is conducted in a business-like manner. Job development is an ongoing process in which a variety of training sites are identified to meet the training needs of students. The instructor/job coach in this program routinely screens the Gardendale community for training site possibilities. This can be done by visiting a business as a consumer and determining the appropriateness of the setting as well as speaking to the Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations, and social organizations.

Once the instructor targets a business, an initial contact is made by telephone. The instructor briefly describes the program and requests permission to leave a program description at the business for the employer's interest and to schedule a meeting with the employer to further discuss the program and answer questions. During this visit, the job coach gives a functional description of mental retardation, emphasizing the positive aspects of this population as well as their training needs. In addition, the role of the job coach is described and tasks identified so that students can learn with the assistance of the job coach. At this time, the job coach may ask the employer for a commitment to participate in the program. If a commitment is obtained, specific tasks or duties of the student may be identified. An additional visit may be scheduled to observe and analyze designated jobs.

The roles of the instructor/job coach in this program are varied and nontraditional. The instructor assumes the roles of teacher, job development specialist, job placement specialist, and job coach. In addition, the instructor may serve as a type of coordinator by contacting and accessing adult service agencies (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, United Cerebral Palsy, Association for Retarded Citizens) to assist in the development of transition goals and plans. These efforts facilitate employment outcomes for individuals with mental retardation and other handicapping conditions.

Summary

The Supported Vocational Training Program is a community-based work experience program developed to improve the employment outcomes of individuals with mildly handicapping conditions, particularly mental retardation. It borrows heavily from a supported employment model. This program is not a static program nor should it be. Instead, it constantly evolves and adapts to meet the training needs of the population it serves.

A Vocational Education Program in Jefferson County

Beverly Lavender

The Vocational Education Department in the Jefferson County School district in Birmingham, Alabama, which presently serves over 1000 special education students, has developed a county-wide transition program for those who are either considering or are already placed in vocational programs. The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the program's main features.

The Vocational Education Program

Transition services begin with the identification of all students with disabilities in the ninth grade. As such, the Program's transition coordinator performs a series of vocational screening activities at this grade level with all such students, using the Vocational Interest Survey, Vocational Learning Styles Inventory, along with a compilation of other test results. This information is then shared with special education teachers, vocational counselors, and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Subsequently, pre-IEP committee meetings are held to recommend further vocational assessment using the Selected Assessment Modules (SAM) system and vocational training placement.

A close working relationship with the Division of Rehabilitation Services is an integral part of the vocational transition program in Jefferson County. The Jefferson County School District has five transition counselors from the Department of Rehabilitation Services and each of these counselors are in each school assigned, one day per-week.

At the beginning of each school year, these rehabilitation counselors are provided a list of all students enrolled in special education classes which are housed in the schools to which they are assigned. This information is made available by the special education teachers (grades 9-12) who report the name, address, telephone number, exceptionality, and vocational placement for each student. Also, the rehabilitation counselors, who are given office space in each of their schools, participate in classroom activities and attend IEP meetings. The Program's transition coordinator provides assistance in the development of the transition IEP meetings, as well. Furthermore, the transition coordinator strongly encourages the working relationship between vocational rehabilitation counselors, vocational instructors, special education teachers, and parents. Finally, extensive vocational assessments are given to students in the 11th grade, in order to provide a comprehensive transition plan for the 12th grade for each student sponsored by rehabilitation services.

Another important feature of the Program is the teacher training/in-service education provided to vocational instructors and special education teachers. These educational activities address a variety of important topics in transition, including such subjects matter as the need for program modification, instructional strategies, vocational IEP development, and job placement for students with disabilities. In-service training is also given to special education teachers in service areas available through the Department of Rehabilitation Services (e.g., vocational assessment interpretation, transition planning, functional curriculum, and networking with community agencies).

In addition, training assistance is provided to special education teachers in teaching employability skills, functional curriculum and career awareness, with an emphasis placed on social skills, communication skills, job seeking skills, and work behaviors. Special materials are purchased for the moderate to severely handicapped students and shared with teachers across the school district. Of course, as a result these in-service training programs, many additional referrals are made to the supported vocational training programs within the district.

Development of community-based work experience opportunities for moderate to severely handicapped students is an ongoing priority within the vocational education department and thus this Vocational Education program. This commitment to community-based work experiences has required support from the Vocational Education Advisory Council. With such strong support, however, the Program has been able to create more community agencies, which have in turn have become a large part of the transition program in the area of supported employment. Two programs are currently available in the area of community-based work experience and plans are being made to expand this opportunity to more locations as funding permits.

Finally, vocational academic remediation services are now available to students with disabilities in the JOBS Centers. The Job Orientation and Basic Skills Centers are located in the major Vocational Education Centers. Academic remediation in applied vocational academics and employability skills training are offered during the vocational lab period. These centers are computer labs utilizing the Skills Bank II software and numerous other specialty programs to help strengthen academic skills. In addition to these services, special vocational programs are also available in the areas of exploratory industrial arts, exploratory home economics and hotel/motel services.

State, Local, and Individual Planning for Transition Programs and Services

Nancy E. Elliott and Elizabeth Houser

Transition from school-to-work is currently a priority among parents, educators, students, rehabilitation agencies and the federal government. Initially, the term transition implies the development of secondary vocational programs to assure quality preparation for youth with disabilities as they enter the job market. Secondly, transition implies cooperation from a number of agencies working together, in order to assist with both job placement and the appropriate supports necessary for that individual to live, work, and recreate in his/her community. The purpose of this paper is to present a planning model for transition programs and services. Even though the model was developed in Georgia and is currently being utilized in that state, it has implications for any other state, including Alabama.

Project SETS

Project SETS, an acronym for Supported Employment and Transition Services, has developed a model that utilizes existing services and agencies to create successful transition outcomes for individuals with severe disabilities in the State of Georgia. The model creates interagency transition planning teams at the state, local and individual levels. Also, the model includes (a) the development of community-based vocational training programs in the secondary level of the schools, and (b) interagency coordination for job development, placement and coaching during the final year in school. Thus, by the time graduation occurs, individuals with severe disabilities have been identified, placed and trained with on-going support in place. The remainder of this narrative addresses the model's three levels of planning.

Planning at the State Level

Interagency cooperation, which begins at the **state** level, requires a commitment from each agency and each member of the agency to work cooperatively with members of other agencies for the good of the individual rather than for the good of each agency. In order to help accomplish this goal, a state-wide transition planning committee needs to be established and preferably meet quarterly. As is the case with Georgia, members of this committee should be representatives from the State Department of Education, Division for Exceptional Children, the State Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Divisions for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse.

Of course, the primary purpose of the State Planning Committee is the development and implementation of transition services for the "entire" state. Georgia's first state-wide interagency activity under the direction of Project SETS was to develop a memorandum of understanding among agencies that identified common goals and purposes regarding transition. This procedure helped each agency to (a) commit to the interagency model of transition, (b) acknowledge that community-based vocational curriculum is "best practice" for individuals with severe disabilities, and (c) state that Supported Employment is a valued outcome of the educational process for individuals with severe disabilities. Each participating agency was then encouraged to maximize resources and services for youth in transition.

Another purpose for the state-wide committee is to overcome barriers identified by the local levels as they are identified. Examples of typical barriers that might need to be addressed include: (a) personnel time to attend all ITP meetings, (b) dual caseloads on individuals while still in school but being served by adult services job coaches, and (c) the staffing patterns for the school community-based programs. Of course, the Committee needs to deal with these and other important issues and inform local communities of resolutions or alternatives. In summary, while the development of interagency cooperation for transition services at the state level is often slow, it is an essential component of a sound transition program.

Planning at the Local Level

The **local** interagency transition planning teams represent the second level necessary for transition to be an effective tool. The local teams should be composed of representatives from the school system that include the director of special education, the consultant for mental handicaps and the job developer/trainer. Also, as is the case in Georgia, in some of the local communities the public transportation agency should participate, as well as the department's of labor and parks and recreation.

The main purpose of the local teams, which hold monthly meetings, is to identify and develop needed policies and procedures to insure the successful transition of students from school to supported employment in their respective geographic areas. Each local team develops a purpose and philosophy statement and a transition timeline that identifies for parents, students, teachers and significant others the specific activities necessary to assure successful transition. The local teams also develop and implement the local policies and procedures, which allow the agency personnel at the local level to better work together to transition students.

Planning at the Individual Level

The final level of transition is directly related to the **individual** in transition. At this level, there needs to be a transition team developed for each student identified to receive transition services. The members of the individual transition team usually include the student, the parents or guardians, the current teacher, the school community-based job developer, the rehabilitation services counselor, the developmental services case manager, the job developer, and director. This committee must begin to act at age 16 when the first ITP (Individual Transition Plan) is written. The ITP is then updated on an annual basis as a function of the Individual Committee. The ITP is a future planning document that looks at an individual's life two, three, or five years into the future. Even though the ITP does not always identify immediate actions, it definitely serves as an imperative tool for planning for each individual's future.

Finally, the individual transition team has the additional responsibility for the cooperative "job placement" of each of their students. This service stage may be accomplished by identifying resources for the job developer of potential jobs or by making a contact for the job developer. In essence, it is the responsibility of the individual transition team to identify the types of support and the support personnel necessary for an individual to be placed in a supported employment position. Also, each team plans and pools their resources to achieve the identified supports by utilizing cooperative job placement and coaching strategies. In summary, it is cooperative efforts such as this that allow transition to be smoother for both the supported employee and his/her family.

Self-Directed Abilities and Opportunities for Students in Transition

Philip Browning

> **For most persons the ability and opportunity to make choices and decisions is an important and cherished component of their lives. The opportunity to make choices reflects favorably on one's perceived independence, dignity, and self-worth. Expressions of free choice are not only highly valued by our society, but are also protected and encouraged. According to the published literature, however, opportunities to make choices, decisions, and express preferences are conspicuously absent from educational programs for persons who are handicapped.** (Mithaugm Martin, Agran & Rusch, 1988, p. 29) (author's underline).

The focus of this paper is upon self-directed abilities (in-school) and opportunities (out-of-school) for exceptional youth and young adults in transition. According to this model, the task to teach self-directed and self-determination skills extends beyond the student's in-classroom "acquisition" of these skills to their "application" of them with their peers and older handicapped adults in small enhancement groups that belong to and are run by them.

Self-Directed Abilities

One of the major considerations that needs to be given to transition programs is to approach the delivery of transition services through the teaching of a set of generic cognitive skills that can be used in making successful transitions. As noted by Deschler, Schumaker, Lenz, and Ellis (1984), this set of skills would allow a person to make decisions, solve problems, set goals, plan for the future, and implement and reach those goals. Also, such transition skills would enhance the ability of exceptional students to plan, manage, and direct their own lives and thus exert greater control over their own destiny (Weisenstein, & Elrod, 1987).

The reasons for selecting the set of self-directed skills presented below are several. First, they represent a set of skills which enable one to become more self-sufficient and independent. Second, they have been socially validated as relevant skill building areas for special students in high school. And third, they have received relatively little formal attention in the classroom in spite of their social validation.

Problem-Solving Skills

> **Clearly, programs are needed that enhance self-direction and that teach problem-solving skills in classrooms, community sites, and work settings. Such approaches should focus upon generic adaptability skills . . .** (Mithang, Martin & Agran, 1987, p. 501).

Social problem-solving is a cognitive-behavioral strategy that can enable one to more effectively and independently manage and regulate one's own life. According to Mithaug, Martin,and Agran (1987), ". . . the core of a transition program should focus upon instructing students to solve problems independently. . ." (p. 501). Not only are these skills demanded by the school curriculum, but they are required for successful adjustments to social and life situations during post-school years (Alley & Deschsler, 1979).

Goal-Setting

> **One viable alternative . . . is to approach the delivery of transition education through the teaching of a set of generic cognitive skills . . . This set of skills would allow a person to make decisions, solves problems, set goals, plan for the future and implement and reach goals . . .** (Deschler, Schumaker, Lenz, & Ellis, 1984, p. 73).

Goal-setting is another important cognitive-behavioral life enhancement strategy to teach handicapped learners of adolescent and young adult age. The reasons are many, including: (a) the attributes or properties of goal-setting are well known; (b) the effects of goal-setting with respect to task performance are well known; and (c) it is a strategy for self-direction, self-management, and self-achievement, all of which are enabling features of successful transition and independent living.

Requesting Assistance

> **Seeking help can be classified as an act of effort in that the help-seeker is actively using available resources to increase the likelihood of future success . . . Help-seeking is seen as a task-relevant effort and as such is an investment that increases competence . . . In everyday problem-solving situations, learners may be afforded opportunities to call upon problem-solving resources to themselves. Under such conditions, the ability to solicit, obtain, and use help becomes an important learning skill.** (Nelson-LeGall, 1981, pp 65-66).

Requesting assistance, a type of assertiveness skill, is also an important cognitive-behavioral strategy for personal management. In essence, the ability to solicit, obtain, and use help is an adaptive learning skill which is relevant across one's life span and increases the likelihood of their future success (Ames, 1983; Nelson-LeGall, 1981, 1985). It also requires a level of cognitive sophistication in that for one to initiate help-seeking, one ". . . must become aware of obstacles to goal attainment, must learn to view other people as resources valuable for goal achievement, and must learn means of enlisting *others to help attain these goals" (Nelson-LeGall, 1985, pp. 70-71).*

Being Positive

> **To be successful in a learning situation, and to generalize the skills that have been learned, students must overcome negative attitudes about themselves and the learning situation** (Weisenstein and Elrod, 1987, p. 44).

Finally, "being positive" is a cognitive-behavioral strategy that can enable one to more satisfyingly and successfully manage one's own life. At first glance, thinking and acting with a positive outlook toward life doesn't seem to fit with the skills of social problem solving, goal setting, and requesting assistance. However, negative thinking is a major obstacle to effectively solving problems and striving towards goals. For example, common blockages in such processes as problem solving and goal setting often involve negative factors such as little confidence, poor self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Rubin, 1983).

Social validation data is presented below for the purpose of further substantiating the relevance of this set of skills for enhancing one's level of self-direction and self-determination. This information is derived from a recently conducted statewide survey with 170 special secondary teachers regarding their opinions and practices with respect to a variety of curriculum considerations (Browning & White, unpublished manuscript). The table below reports their responses with respect to their interests in or perceived need of curriculum materials in these four skill areas.

Table 1

Secondary Special Education Teachers' Reported Interest in or Perceived Need for a Set of Cognitive Behavioral Skills (N=170)

Degree of Interest/Need

Self-Directed skills	1 % Very Interested	2 % Somewhat Interested	3 %Somewhat uninterested	4 % Not interested
Social Problem Solving	41*	47	11	1
Goal Setting	30	46	20	4
Requesting Assistance	31	45	20	4
Being Positive	41	42	15	2

*41% of 170 secondary special education teachers were very interested in curriculum to teach social problem solving as a cognitive behavioral skill.

Self-Directed Opportunities through Groups

It is not only the ability(s) that are important for self-determination, however, but also the "opportunities" for one to make choices and decisions with respect to their own destiny. Thus, while much of the in-school experiences may be devoted to the learning of these self-directed skills, out-of-school experiences are essential for meaningfully applying those skills. A major opportunity for further self-directed learning for these students is through self-help/self-advocacy groups.

The self-help, self-advocacy movement has been underway in this country for over a decade for people with disabilities, including those with developmental disabilities (i.e., People First). A very critical component of this self-empowerment movement has been the establishment of self-help, self-advocacy groups. Through this process of peer group identification, the members gain, among other things: (a) open and permissive communication with persons who have experienced the same problem or condition and societal reactions to it, (b) enhanced opportunities of socialization for individuals who are otherwise frequently isolated and or/alienated, and (c) social learning of coping abilities from peers who are successfully living with the condition (Katz, 1970; Jacques & Patterson, 1974). In addition, they learn

- the right to speak out and be heard,
- the right to self-determination,
- the right to choice-making,
- the right to services,
- the right to consumer control, and
- the right to citizenship.

Unfortunately, these self-help/self-advocacy opportunities have been limited primarily to those of post-secondary age. As such, it is ripe time that those of high school age also be provided the opportunity to participate in the movement through small self-help groups. Such an opportunity will allow them not only to partake in self-determination activities but actually utilize with their peers the self-directed skills taught them in school.

One such self-help organization that has direct implications for developmentally disabled students in transition is known as People First International, Inc. (Browning, Rhoades, and Thorin, 1984; Rhoades, Browning, and Thorin, 1986). This exciting organization, which has been referred to as a "quiet revolution", consists of community-based groups which provide a forum for their members to learn, among other things, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to speak on their own behalf. Its continuing evolution is impressive indeed, especially when one considers that this voluntary self-help advocacy organization is largely directed and nurtured by the members for whom it is intended---people who are mentally retarded!

Proponents of the organization continue to point out that it is run exclusively by and for people with developmental disabilities, with a primary goal to inform the public that, first and foremost, **handicapped persons are people---they have something to offer**---and, **they can do things the public has generally thought they could not do**. For individual members, the organization strives to (a) facilitate learning and sharing with each other, (b) provides a strength and visibility found only in groups, and (c) offers a group of peers with whom mentally retarded persons learn to speak on their own behalf.

One of the important considerations with respect to these self-directed groups is the role of non-handicapped advisors. Since professional leadership (e.g., special education teachers, rehabilitation counselors) would contradict and violate the basic precepts of a member-controlled support system, professional involvement must be modified to adapt to the self-help group's distinctive culture. That is, they are expected to". . . act as peers and shorten the social distance between themselves and the members by diffusing the leadership function and sharing their own concerns with the group" (Vattano, 1972, p. 14).

Furthermore, in order to prevent the possibility of violating the integrity of the group, the professional must move beyond the traditional viewpoint of "professional helping client," toward a recognition of self-help members as peers who are capable of giving as well as receiving. This requires a willingness and desire to become personally involved and deeply empathetic with members' causes and concerns. In short, the professional who participates in a self-help group must be prepared to serve as a friend and consultant who suggests, rather than an expert who prescribes.

With this recognition, proponents of self-help groups recognize that there are certain functions and unique contributions that professionals can perform which can enhance the efforts of members, including (a) assisting in the formation of new groups (e.g., assisting members to recruit a membership body, identify goals, and develop a structure); (b) to serve as a facilitator or catalyst, particularly when a group is newly formed; (c) to act as a resource person who can do research on problems the group confronts and help evaluate the effectiveness of methods employed to reach group goals.

Starting-up and running a self-help group requires the cultivation of assertiveness and leadership skills, which of course are generally lacking in persons with developmental disabilities who have typically led very passive and somewhat sheltered lives. Thus, in order to enhance this process, a curriculum has been developed for training potential non-handicapped advisors to help start-up and work with these groups in a facilitative capacity (Rhoades and Browning, 1986). Entitled Self-advocacy for people with developmental disabilities: Teachers Resource Book and Five-Part Video Series, this training program curriculum is briefly presented at the end of this paper.

Summary

One of the more recent indicators of the status of the self-directed, self-determination movement for people with disabilities is reflected in the 29 self-determination recommendations, which resulted from a 1989 national conference sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. The first of these recommendations was that "The enabling of people with disabilities to determine their own futures be seen as the top priority in all government policy making functions" (Self-Determination, 1989, p. 6). Of course, I am sure that most persons in the area of transition education and services agree that self-direction/self-determination represents the ultimate mission we have in our business, for it is only through these self-empowering abilities that one's level of human decency, pride, and sense of self-worth can be immensely enhanced and community adjustment and independent living augmented!

If those of us in transition services can increase our understanding of self-determination, develop and refine strategies for effectively increasing it, and influence the extent to which these strategies are practiced in our transition programs, then significant gains will have been made in better preparing the students to live a more self-managed and self-directed life in the community. The Self-Directed Model introduced in this paper is designed as one strategy for helping to advance this mission. By teaching them self-directed skills in the classroom, they will be better able to take control of their own destiny. By providing them an opportunity to practice those skills through small groups (self-help/self-advocacy groups) in the community, they will be better prepared to live a more productive and independent life.

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Videotape Series on Self-Advocacy Groups for the Developmentally Disabled

Speaking for Ourselves. An overview of the self-advocacy movement is presented through actual groups in various stages of development engaging in a variety of self-advocacy activities, including local chapter meetings, fund raising, social events, and state conventions. Testimonials are also given by group leaders about what self-advocacy means to them.

Starting a Self-Advocacy Group. A practical guide for starting a self-advocacy group is given by self-advocate leaders and advisors. The major content includes setting group goals, organizational models, membership recruitment, the role of officers, finding a place to meet, and transportation.

The Role of the Advisor in Self-Advocacy. Major problems and issues faced by nonhandicapped advisors are discussed by experienced advisors from the United States, England, and Australia. This live dialogue is interfaced with opinions given by self-advocate leaders about the advisor's role.

Officer Training. Officer training is introduced with footage from an actual officer training meeting with newly elected officers. Innovative strategies for preparing self-advocates as leaders are demonstrated.

Self-Advocacy in Action. Self-advocate leaders from the United States, Canada, England, and Australia illustrate the philosophy and practice of self-advocacy. Viewers witness self-advocates running their own organization and speaking as experts on their own disability.

Resources In Alabama for Job Placement

Connie Brechin

"The most desired vocational outcome for young persons with disabilities is unsubsidized competitive employment" (Alabama Guidelines For Transition, 1987). Even though little information is available regarding vocational outcomes for special education students in Alabama, it is believed that many students exit Alabama schools without access to resources they may need to become competitively employed.

A goal of transition planners in Alabama is to achieve parental and interagency cooperation in order to make paid employment a reality for many special education students during their senior year in high school. Placing a student into competitive employment while enrolled in school will allow the student to learn job survival skills while still receiving support services from school staff.

The Twelfth Annual Report to Congress, published by the United States Department of Education, indicated that those students with mental retardation are the most likely special education students to be in need of direct job placement services. With respect to Alabama, information from the Division of Special Education Services, Alabama State Department of Education, indicates that for the year 1989, a total of 2,410 students with mental retardation exited the public school system. Of this group, 445 obtained diplomas, 1,150 received certificates of completion, 74 reached the mandated age for completion of their public education, 559 dropped out-of-school, and the status of 182 students was reported as unknown (Data Book, 1989). Obviously, there are many students who potentially need job placement services.

For students with mental retardation and other severe disabilities, on-the-job training is sometimes needed prior to job placement. In many cases, those students have not had actual work experience; therefore, they do not have marketable and transferable job skills. On-the-job training gives these students the opportunity to acquire skills under actual employment conditions.

Job Placement Resources

Several of the significant resources at the state, federal, and local levels which can be utilized by parents, educators, and rehabilitation counselors to facilitate training and paid employment are addressed herein. A brief overview of work incentives through the Social Security Administration and employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act is included.

Parents

Parents are a key resource in successful job placement of special education students. According to employment specialists within the Alabama Division of Rehabilitation Services, approximately sixty percent of persons looking for employment locate their jobs with the assistance of family, friends, and relatives. A parent questionnaire has been adapted from the University of Washington Transition Model and was designed to involve parents in planning employment for their children (Brechin, 1991). The questionnaire serves the purpose of increasing parental awareness of their role in the job placement process. Also, it solicits action steps for the parents to take to insure their active participation in this process. Clearly, parental participation is a critical factor in bringing about a smooth transition from school-to-work.

Vocational Rehabilitation On-the-Job Training (OJT)/Employment Development Counseling

Vocational Rehabilitation On-The-Job Training is an important wage subsidy program, reimbursing employers for additional costs incurred in training students with disabilities. As noted by Wehman, et. al. (1988), in most cases

> **. . . the OJT agreement is formalized as a written contract between the VR agency and the employer. There is no typical OJT agreement: the specific terms of an OJT arrangement may vary from state to state, as well as within a state. Employers who accept trainees for on-the-job training programs must pay at least minimum wage (or the going rate for a particular position), and must agree to provide full coverage for Workman's Compensation, unemployment insurance, and Social Security. Also, the trainee should be eligible for any benefits that other employees receive. Rehabilitation counselors can process minimum wage waiver applications for students who cannot meet minimum production standards (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). As with other on-the-job training programs, employers are eligible for Targeted Jobs Tax Credit after they are no longer receiving on-the-job training funds for a particular student.**

The development of additional on-the-job training sites for transitioning high school students is a goal of the Alabama Division of Rehabilitation Services for the next decade (Progress Report FY '90). The agency has a network of employment development counselors to help implement this goal.

Association for Retarded Citizens On-the Job Training Project

An important resource for on-the-job training is the Association for Retarded Citizens On-The-Job Training Project. This project is funded through Title IV of the Jobs

Training Partnership Act. The Coordinator of this national program indicates that the average reimbursement per employer is approximately five hundred dollars. Unfortunately, Alabama's utilization of this project is low. For the purpose of illustration, Alabama was compared to Ohio, a state that uses this program extensively. Ohio, which has approximately two and one-half times the population of Alabama, has received 328 on-the-job training slots to date this year, as compared to only 18 slots received in Alabama (Trigg, 1991). Paperwork required at the local level for this program primarily consists of time sheets to verify hours worked by each student and verification of disability. Applications and additional information can be obtained through the ARC National Employment and Training Program (Trigg, 1991). The State must become responsive to this available resource!

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

> **The Job Training Partnership Act was enacted by the Congress of the United States, primarily, to provide programs for preparing youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force. The programs are to provide needed job training in demand occupations to economically disadvantaged individuals facing barriers to employment. The fundamental measure of effectiveness for these programs is the balanced result of reducing welfare dependency while simultaneously increasing wages and employment** (Alabama Department of Economic Community Affairs, ADECA, 1991).

The United States Department of Labor statistics for the year ending June 30, 1990, indicate that under several JTPA titles affecting transition age students, Alabama's utilization is below the national average. For the last program year, 22,129 Alabama youth were served through JTPA. Under Title IIA, which serves youth, Alabama reported that 6.4 percent of program completers had disabilities while the national average was 14.2 percent. Under Title IIB, which includes the summer Youth Employment Program, Alabama reported 10 percent of program terminees had disabilities while the national average was 13 percent (JTPA Annual Status Report, 1991).

JTPA subsidizes up to fifty percent of wages for up to six months during an on-the-job training program. Increased utilization of this valuable jobs training resource for students with severe disabilities is a critical factor in increasing the state's capacity to improve transition outcomes. Proposals for JTPA School-to-Work Transition (STWT) funding can be submitted by local Education Agencies to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (TJTC)

Another economic incentive for employers to hire persons with disabilities is the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit program (TJTC). As noted by Wehman, et al, (1988):

> **The economic incentive is in the form of a sizable reduction in a company's federal income tax liability based on the amount of wages paid to each worker who qualifies an employer for the credit. The program is appealing because there is little paperwork involved, and the burden of proving a worker's eligibility is completely handled by outside agencies.**
>
> **State employment agencies act as the program managers at the state and local levels to oversee certification procedures. Employers may contact the job service division and request only TJTC eligible candidates for their job openings** (Wehman, et. al., 1988).

The rehabilitation liaison counselor with each school system can initiate TJTC paperwork for clients of the Alabama Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Social Security Work Incentives

Social Security Work Incentives will significantly impact job placement for many students with disabilities because many parents and students are concerned about losing financial and medical benefits if the student goes to work. There is currently an emphasis by the Social Security Administration to provide incentives for recipients to enter the work force.

Since 1980, many actual barriers to employment have been alleviated for Social Security recipients. Work incentives have been added and liberalized under the Social Security Disability Amendments of 1980 and other related public laws. Public law 99-643 removed some of the greatest disincentives to employment.

> **Section 1619A of the law enables individuals who continue to be disabled and who work to receive a special SSI cash benefit. Section 1619B is an extremely important provision since it protects an individual's medical coverage while he or she is working, even if cash benefits are phased out. Additional work incentives such as Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), and Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) have had a positive impact on supported employees** (RRTC, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1990).

Unfortunately, information from many sources indicate that only a small number of Alabama beneficiaries are taking advantage of benefit reforms. In a December, 1990, Social Security Administration document, for example, it was reported that only twelve "Program for Achieving Self Support" (PASS) plans were completed for that reporting period. For the same period, only 86 claims for "Impairment Related Work Expenses" (IRWE) were filed (Quarterly Report on SSI, 1990).

There is currently an emphasis by the Social Security Administration on SSI outreach. More high school students with severe disabilities and economic need will be receiving SSI benefits. Clearly, Alabama's employment specialists, parents, and teachers need to become more aware of work incentives!

Americans with Disabilities Act

Employment provisions of the American's with Disabilities Act offer promise in enhancing job opportunities for students with disabilities. In essence,

> **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 will eventually affect all private employers with fifteen or more workers, as well as all places of public accommodations and services. Title I of the bill, which prohibits discrimination in regard to job applications, becomes effective in two years for employers with twenty-five or more workers, and in four years for employers with fifteen to twenty-four employees** (Doyon, 1990).

These prohibitions will apply to job application procedures, hiring, advancement, employee compensation, training, discharge of employees, and other terms and privileges of employment. Under this Act, employers must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result. This employment title will be enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Attorney General, and through private lawsuits (Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1991). The Division of Rehabilitation Services is currently working with many Alabama employers to assist them with plans to positively implement this legislation.

In summary, it is clear the challenge exists to improve interagency cooperation and to increase the utilization of job placement resources in Alabama. Also, parents must be effectively brought into the planning and job placement partnership for it is only through these kinds of cooperative efforts that the outcome of unsubsidized competitive employment for students with severe disabilities will be realized.

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Serving Needs and Involving Families in Transition

William English and Stephen Dunaway

This conference paper presents highlights from a training presentation on family involvement in transition. Specifically, the focus is on (a) family needs, (b) three general strategies for involving families in facilitating independence, and (c) specific tips for family involvement in preparation for work. The information provided can be presented in various formats ranging in length from one hour to two days.

Family Needs

Most experienced professionals and well adjusted persons effected by disabilities fully understand the extreme interdependence of all family members and understand the importance of extending interventions to the immediate family as well as the disabled individual. Unfortunately, however, current habilitation and rehabilitation services still too often replicate an outdated traditional medical model by focusing almost exclusive attention on intervention by professionals "to" individual's with disabilities. Consequently, family needs are very often ignored, and key family members are overlooked or under-utilized by professionals during intervention. The rationale for embracing key family independence for persons with disabilities reflects four factors:

1. Disablement, traumatically and permanently, effects entire family systems (e.g., parents, siblings, aunts/uncles, cousins, grandparents, best friends).

2. Families are a lifespan support resource who have the greatest stake in coping across the lifespan of each family member.

3. Family wellness relates closely to individuals with disabilities realizing their potential and independence.

4. Families can, and often will, sabotage interventions they do not understand or support.

By way of definition, family involvement has two dimensions. The first of these is getting help for yourself, receiving services, so you can effectively help your family member who is disabled. Examples of services that help family members cope are counseling to gain self-understanding and self-control, stress management, assertiveness training and respite assistance. The second type of family involvement is helping others, either a family member who is disabled or others (e.g. professionals or other's with disability, etc.)

All families have needs, in at least eight areas: (a) economic; (b) health and security; (c) physical/daily living; (d) recreational; (e) affection; (f) self-definition; (g) socialization; and (h) education. The more families' needs are met the more likely they are to be functional, healthy and helpful to others. Personal/social supporters (e.g. relatives) and professionals can intervene to help families meet their needs. Because disablement is a major stressor, most families need increased support in virtually every area but especially they may need assistance (a) economically, (b) in self-direction or self-understanding, (c) in socialization to promote connectiveness, and (d) in education to acquire skills for being a helper (e.g. behavior manager, or case manager).

In addition, empowerment is a constant and overriding need of most family members as well as the disabled themselves. Process strategies for enhancing empowerment, and thereby self-direction and participation, include: encouragement; support; respect; accurate information; honesty; respect; tangible assistance; good humor; and, perhaps most important, shared responsibility.

Three General Strategies for Involving Families

A variety of strategies will contribute to increased family involvement in improving the quality of life for the disabled and themselves. Three promising strategies include: (a) mastery in a helping role; (b) parent education and (c) partnership or collaboration.

Close family members can directly help their relative with a disability through at least six helping roles: (a) advocate, (b) trainer, (c) educator, (d) peer counselor, (e) case manager, and (f) volunteer. Because it is unreasonable to expect that hardly anyone can be highly competent in many roles, especially complex roles like educator or case manager, caution needs to be taken to not professionalize family members. However, family members should understand they can help in a variety of ways and be encouraged to choose a helper role that suits them and to then gain targeted training and supervision to gain high competence. A secondary benefit of helping others is that in most instances family members themselves grow and mature as individuals.

Groups help family members learn about disablement, intervention and barriers to independence through family education. Family education groups are cost efficient because they usually meet only 1-2 times a month, only require a small amount of direction from one professional coordinator, allow for co-management by a steering committee of family members, and allow for free contributions by many guest speakers. Moreover, family education groups provide an informal climate for support, and thus appeal to many persons who are reluctant to participate in formal counseling.

Partnership or collaboration between family members and professionals is another very helpful strategy for enhancing independence. To be effective, partnerships must include respect, shared responsibility and a goal/task orientation. Six coping parents of young adults with disabilities who are successfully achieving independence recently made five recommendations for coping on a recent videotape production (English & Munkres, 1988) on transition. Their ideas are very sound and include: (1) Avoid being competitive; (2) Be assertive but not aggressive: (3) Parents should use professional expertise; (4) Professionals should make use of parents as resources for others - professionals, disabled persons, and family members.

Family Involvement in Preparation for Work

Families are vital resources preparing children to be workers, and parents especially can be very influential leaders in vocational mentoring. Several specific tips for parents are to:

- Talk about work and work benefits positively;
- model good work habits;
- hold expectations that all children do household chores and reward their efforts and accomplishment;
- learn about work opportunities for persons with your child's disability;
- encourage children to work and recognize their work effort(s) and accomplishments;
- use the extended family system/network to provide job training experiences and pay;
- supervise home related work and provide constructive criticism and support;
- use specific household jobs as opportunities to talk about future work, job training and careers;
- advocate for vocational training and employment services in high school and in the community; and
- collaborate with vocational specialists to prepare young adults with disabilities for work.

Family Perceptions of Transition

William English

In 1990, an interdisciplinary research team from Florida State University conducted a follow-up study of young adults with disabilities who had left special education in the state within the previous three years. The major purposes of this study, which was supported by a state grant and sponsored by the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Florida Bureau for Education of Exceptional Students, were to: (a) determine the extent of successful community adjustment of young Floridians with disabilities; and (b) determine families perceptions of the recent transition from high school to adult life. The findings reflect both good and bad news about the launching transition phase of moving from adolescence to adult life.

The Study

The study conducted was a research survey designed to reflect the conceptual transition "Bridge" model developed by OSERS. Questions were posed to examine families' perceptions of three important components of transition from high school to adult life, which are (a) secondary special education or high school phase of transition, (b) the intensive planning phase of transition, and (c) the adult/community adjustment phase of transition. The research sample was randomly selected from several local school districts located throughout the State. The 108 research participants were predominately parents of young adults with varying disabilities (e.g. learning disabled, 50%; mentally handicapped, 24%).

Good News Results

The good news is that many young adult Floridians with disabilities, about one-third, seem to be handling their launching transition very well. This group, for instance, seems to be employed, living away from their parents, have friends, and essentially is on their own. Other good news is that some family members spoke favorably and were satisfied by their experiences with school services, transition planning, and community-based services. Also, some respondents liked and appreciated the professionals with whom they were affiliated.

Bad News Results

The bad news side of the study is that a substantial majority of family research participants (66%) believe that the launching transition has been a very difficult and painful experience for most young adult Floridians with disabilities. This group is mainly made up of unemployed young adults, who are living a passive and dependent life style at home with aging parents.

Other bad news is that a majority of the consumers surveyed believed they received very little meaningful help in all three phases of OSER's Bridge Model of Transition (i.e., school services, intensive planning, and community services). Similarly, most consumers believed that the vocational/economic, residential/leisure, and social/interpersonal supports for young adults with disabilities are woefully inadequate.

Policy Recommendations

The following are 10 selected policy recommendations, out of 36 total recommendations, for improving the launching transition for young adults with disabilities:

1. Start services related to employment and maximizing independence early, beginning in elementary school.

2. Sequence transition planning longitudinally, to span school services from about grade 6, age 12, through post-secondary community services (about age 24).

3. Plan and implement functional academic curriculum in school and community based settings that is practically related to economic self-sufficiency, self-direction and quality of life. In turn, abandon meaningless acquisition of the basic three R's.

4. Empower persons with disabilities and their families as full partners in service delivery, through respect, high expectations, and shared responsibility.

5. Individualize and personalize all planning and service delivery.

6. Emphasize collaborative partnerships between consumers and professionals.

7. Add professional jobs for vocational specialists (e.g. rehabilitation counselors) who can most effectively intervene to vocationally evaluate, train, guide, and place young adults with disabilities in jobs.

8. Increase access to job training opportunities for young adults with disabilities through strategies such as improved marketing, transportation assistance and more flexible scheduling.

9. Plan and implement multifaceted services to young adults with disabilities and their families that address multiple but inter-related needs (e.g. vocational appraisal, job training, employment, daily living skills, financial assistance, social/interpersonal communication skills, residential options, spirituality, leisure recreation, and counseling and interpersonal supports.)

10. Provide families of individuals with severe disabilities with appropriate adult education so they can acquire the information, skills and confidence to function effectively as case managers.